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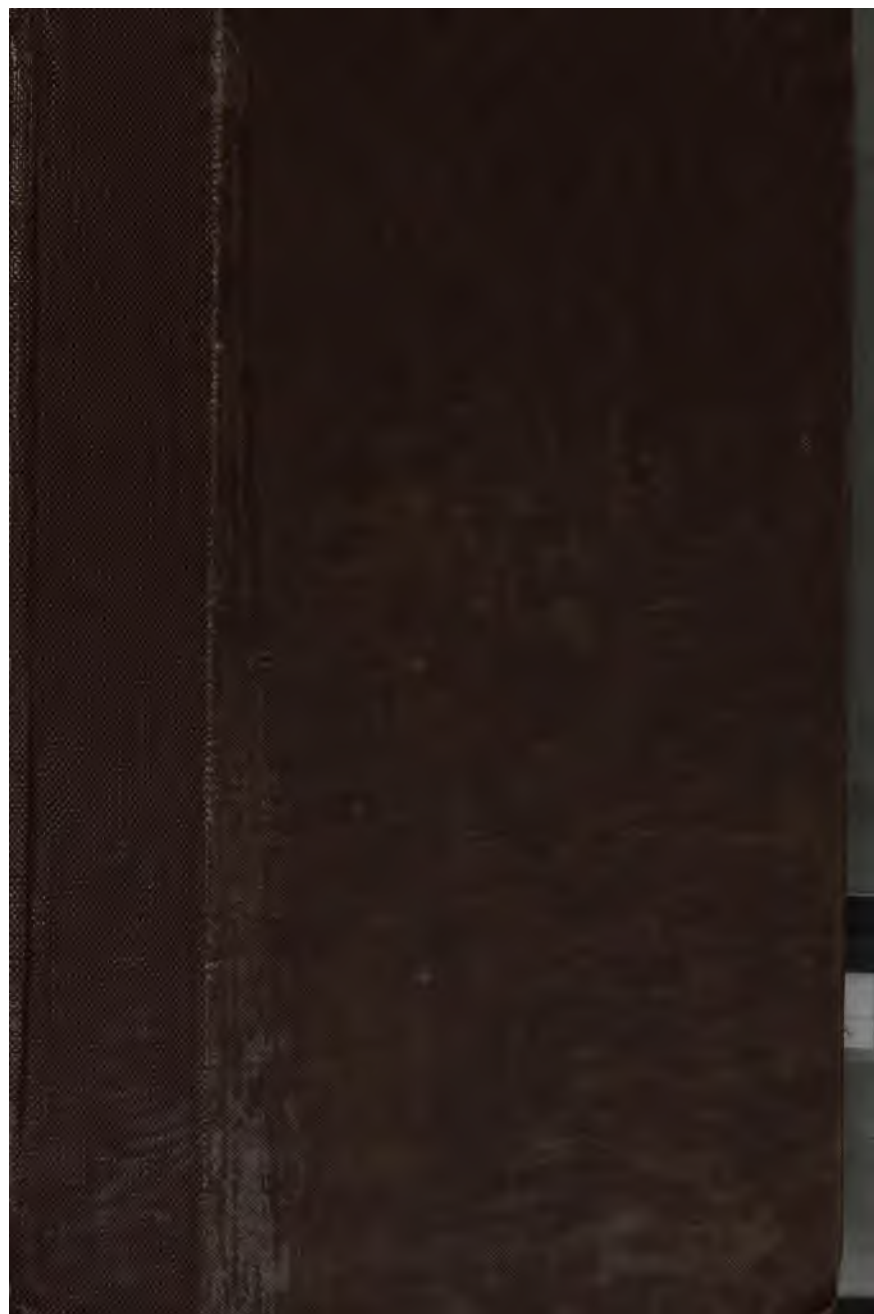
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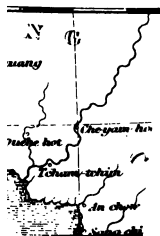








125°



CHINA.

VOL. I.



GROUP OF CHINESE GENTLEMEN.

OLIVER & BOYD, EDINBURGH.

AN
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE
ACCOUNT
OF
CHINA ;

ITS ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORY, LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, RELIGION,
GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY, MANNERS, AND SOCIAL STATE ; INTERCOURSE
WITH EUROPE FROM THE EARLIEST AGES ; MISSIONS AND EMBASSIES TO
THE IMPERIAL COURT ; BRITISH AND FOREIGN COMMERCE ; DIRECTIONS
TO NAVIGATORS ; STATE OF MATHEMATICS AND ASTRONOMY ; SURVEY OF
ITS GEOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY, BOTANY, AND ZOOLOGY.

BY

HUGH MURRAY, F. R. S. E. ;
JOHN CRAWFURD, ESQ. ; PETER GORDON, ESQ. ;
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Late Professor of Botany, King's College, London.

WITH A MAP, AND THIRTY-SIX ENGRAVINGS BY JACKSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH :
OLIVER & BOYD, TWEEDDALE COURT ;
AND SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO., LONDON.
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ENTERED IN STATIONERS' HALL.

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PREFACE.

THE importance and interest attached to the subject of this Work appear to be now fully appreciated by the Public. China, from the antiquity of its origin, its early progress in arts and civilisation, and the very peculiar form which its institutions have assumed, exhibits an aspect differing from that of every other empire, ancient or modern. Its story is that of the largest portion of mankind that have ever been united under one political and social system. Recent events also have opened to Britain prospects of vastly extended intercourse; so that the wall of separation which has so long stood between the two nations is soon likely to be, in a great measure, broken down.

These considerations have induced us to assign to the history, learning, commerce, and statistics of that immense sovereignty a larger space than usual, and to bestow upon them the most careful research. To this task we were further urged, by reflecting that there does not, so far as we know, exist at present any channel by which the historical inquirer can obtain a complete and connected view of them. Successive missionaries, indeed, in the course of two centuries, have transmitted to Europe many important communications; but these, from

their very magnitude, are nearly inaccessible to the ordinary reader. The General History, for example, in thirteen large quarto volumes, and the Miscellaneous Memoirs in sixteen, encumbered with much irrelevant matter, present a mass which few will be inclined to penetrate. Various translations, no doubt, have been lately made from Chinese writers, which have enlarged considerably our knowledge of that nation; yet none of them have been found suited to European taste. Du Halde alone attempted to reduce to a convenient form the very valuable records of which he had the command; but his volumes are now, in a great degree, superseded by fuller and more recent information.

Although, however, there has not hitherto been any single work in which a satisfactory account of China might be found, those above mentioned, with various others, afford ample materials for accomplishing such an undertaking. Availing himself of these advantages, the Author has made every exertion to present within a suitable compass such a view of the history, productions, commerce, political and social state of this great empire, as will at once amuse and instruct a British reader.

After a general survey of the aspect and natural features of the country, he proceeds to delineate, from the voluminous works of Mailla and other writers, a comprehensive outline of Chinese history. Without entering into a minute detail of facts, he has sought to exhibit the advances made in civilisation and the arts; the most memorable events that distinguished the successive dynas-

ties ; together with a philosophical view of the causes whence originated their rise and their downfall. He then adverts to the knowledge possessed by the Greeks and Romans relative to China ; on which subject he presumes to hope that he has thrown additional light, by tracing an early maritime route to Canton, and the existence of an ancient trade in tea. The remainder of the first volume is occupied by the transactions of the modern European nations ; their attempts to open a commercial intercourse ; their various embassies ; and the reception which they severally met with at the imperial court.

The second volume is chiefly devoted to inquiries still more important,—the language, literature, religion, government, industry, manners, and social life of the Chinese. Recourse has been had to the most authentic sources of information ; and no pains have been spared to illustrate subjects so interesting, and in general so imperfectly understood. There is added a succinct account of British intercourse from the earliest period to which the lights of history extend.

In the third volume, after a condensed view of all that is known respecting the interior of the empire, its foreign commerce, particularly with our own country, is described. This subject, so extremely important at the present moment, is luminously discussed by Mr Peter Gordon and Mr John Crawford,—the latter a gentleman who has established a well-merited reputation by his “ History of the Indian Archipelago,” and by his account of the embassies to the courts of Ava, Siam, and Cochin-China. In the discharge of his official duties on

these occasions, as well as when Governor of Singapore, he enjoyed ample opportunities of collecting information, which he has here employed with his characteristic activity and intelligence.

It appeared of importance to introduce directions relative to the navigation to China, corresponding to those in our work on British India. This task has been ably performed by Captain Lynn,—an officer long employed by the Company in navigating their vessels, and afterwards as Examiner of their naval officers, and whose Nautical Tables and other works display a thorough acquaintance, not only with the scientific principles of his profession, but also with the intricate straits and channels to which he here supplies a guide. In composing the chapter for which we are indebted to him, he communicated with Captain Horsburgh, who liberally allowed the use of his valuable collections.

Mathematics and Astronomy, though they appear not to have at any time risen to high eminence in China, present some striking peculiarities. The account of these sciences,—embracing their history and actual condition,—has been contributed by Professor Wallace, whose distinguished attainments are a sufficient guarantee, that it will be found both interesting and satisfactory.

The Natural History of those vast provinces is the branch which remained longest in a state of imperfection,—an inconvenience resulting from the strict prohibition imposed upon the intercourse of Europeans. Of late, however, the exertions of the British residents at Canton have procured from the interior numerous speci-

mens, many of which now adorn our museums and gardens. To Mr Reeves, particularly, the scientific world is indebted for these important advantages ; and his friendly communications have been found of essential service in the composition of this division of the present Work.

The Chapter on Geology and Mineralogy, which has been prepared with great attention, will be found to contain many interesting facts, and to present as full a view of these branches of knowledge, as could be obtained in the present limited state of our acquaintance with the central parts of China.

Botany, a subject of the highest importance, has been treated by Gilbert Burnett, Esq., the late professor of that science in King's College. In composing it he enjoyed an unreserved communication with Mr Reeves, and had access to all the materials in possession of the Honourable Company.

With regard to Zoology, it may be stated, that the observations which have been given are enriched with some elegant engravings of animals characteristic of the Chinese empire.

The Author has pleasure in expressing his obligation to Sir Charles Wilkins, for the liberality with which he admitted him to the Museum and Library of the East India Company. His acknowledgments are likewise particularly due to Dr Horsfield, not only for the obliging manner in which he facilitated his access to those collections, but for the aid afforded by him in procuring information from other quarters.

The Map of China has been carefully engraved from a

drawing by Mr Walker, who had the advantage of inspecting all the materials in the possession of Captain Horsburgh. It has been greatly improved by means of the Chart of the Eastern Coast, prepared, with great labour and from the most recent surveys, by that eminent hydrographer.

The Cuts, amounting to thirty-six, executed by Jackson in his best style, are almost entirely taken from original drawings never before engraved. The splendid collections possessed by the Company were liberally submitted to the inspection of the Author. Some valuable subjects have also been obtained by the Publishers from Canton as well as from private individuals; and all of them, it is hoped, will be found well calculated not only to embellish but to illustrate the Work.

MARCH 1836.

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AN
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE
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CHINA.

CHAPTER I.

General View of China.

Situation of China—Causes of its Fertility—Mountain-chains—
Their Aspect and Produce — Great Plains — Rivers — River-
scenery—Lakes—General Character of the Nation.

CHINA is a very extensive empire, forming as it were a world by itself, and separated by a wide interval from any other civilized country. Generally speaking, the great kingdoms of Asia extend along its southern border, chiefly upon the shores of the Indian Ocean, and are bounded on the north by the snowy peaks and pastoral wilds of Tartary. China, on the contrary, is situated on the Pacific, at the eastern extremity of the Asiatic continent, and in the same latitude with the most elevated of its central mountains. But those stupendous chains, the loftiest on the globe, which enclose the high table-lands of Thibet

and Tartary, on entering the Chinese provinces, slope down into ranges of moderate altitude, diffusing beauty and fertility through the regions which they traverse. At the same time, from those vast heights of Interior Asia, rivers descend, which rank with the largest in the world. Crossing the whole empire and receiving numerous tributaries, they bestow upon almost every part of it the benefits of irrigation. They afford also the means of a water-communication, natural and artificial, the most extensive on the globe, and contributing much to its commercial prosperity.

It will appear, even from this very general outline, that the country now to be treated of is at least as highly favoured as any on the face of the earth. China, it is true, has often been regarded as one vast plain ; but this character, had it really existed, would not have proved by any means so beneficial as that which actually distinguishes the land ; because there could not have been those numerous rivers which, in this climate, are essential to fertility. Vast tracts must have continued as unproductive as those sandy deserts which still overspread so large a portion of Western Asia, and even of India. In fact, the mountain-chains, though not extremely lofty, pervade more or less almost every province. The greatest is that which skirts its southern border, and appears evidently to be a prolongation of the gigantic Himmalehs. These last, after marking the northern boundary of Hindostan, and passing along the verge of Assam and the Birman empire, enter the Chinese province of Yun-nan.* To that region

* See Edinburgh Cabinet Library, No. X. Travels and Researches of Alexander Von Humboldt, pp. 420, 421.

they give a completely alpine character, and in their deep recesses afford shelter to barbarous races governed by hereditary chiefs, and yielding little more than a nominal submission to the ruler of China.* As they extend eastward, forming the common frontier of the provinces of Koei-tcheou and Quang-see, they still present a very towering and rugged aspect, and harbour yet ruder and more independent tribes.† Even where they constitute the northern limits of Quang-tung a lofty ridge is formed, which alone interrupts the water-communication between Canton and Pe-king. Although a great part of the summit has by immense exertions been removed, the ascent is very laborious; and the most elevated pass was estimated by Sir George Staunton to be 8000 feet above the sea.‡

The same chain, after passing Quang-tung, appears to continue in a north-eastern direction, and then to form the division between the provinces of Fo-kien and Tche-kiang. In this tract there are several peaks which rise higher than any in the British islands. But still these heights present a smiling and fruitful aspect; their sides, wherever practicable, are cut into terraces, and finely irrigated, often by means of bamboo pipes; while they are richly clothed with trees, particularly the tallow, the camphor, the thuya or arbor vitæ, and abound in plantations of tea and odoriferous shrubs.§ In short, taken in connexion with the fertile plains interposed between them and the coast, they render Tche-kiang one of the very finest parts of the empire.

* Du Halde (4 vols 8vo, English edition, London, 1736), vol. i. pp. 256-264 and 59-61.

† Ibid. vol. i. pp. 264-268, 61, &c.

‡ Staunton's Embassy (3 vols 8vo, London, 1798), vol. iii. p. 345.

§ Ibid. p. 287-289.

The great Asiatic chain appears to terminate before reaching the northern limit of the province just named, and is succeeded by the alluvial plain of Kiang-nan, through which the rivers Hoang-ho and Yang-tse-kiang roll into the ocean. Farther north, no doubt, a large portion of Shan-tung is filled with elevated ridges, which form a bold promontory stretching eastward into the Yellow Sea. Both to the passing mariner, and to travellers on the main road to Pe-king, it presents a rugged, precipitous, and even naked aspect. Lord Macartney, however, observed along the coast many cultivated valleys;* and when the Dutch embassy, in their return, crossed these mountains, they found the intervals between them crowded with villages.†

Even the most level and fertile provinces are encircled by very lofty hills. Between Kiang-nan and Hou-quang,‡ which may be considered as the pride of the empire, there is interposed a very bleak range, covering no inconsiderable portion of both. The envoys of the United Provinces on their way to Pe-king, though they viewed with admiration the efforts which human industry had made to overcome physical disadvantages, saw extensive tracts consisting only of bare rock and heath.§ The French missionaries also, to whom the more interior part of this district afforded a refuge from persecution, de-

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 85.

† Van Braam's Embassy (2 vols 8vo, London, 1798), vol. ii. pp. 93-99 and 101.

‡ These two great provinces have been recently subdivided; the former into Gan-hwuy and Kiang-su, the latter into Hou-pe and Hou-nan. As the original divisions, however, are still recognised, and coincide with the character of the territory, they are used with more advantage in a general survey of the empire.

§ This will appear more particularly in the narrative of it to be hereafter given.

scribe in very lively terms the steep precipices by which it is traversed, though wooded and even fertile districts were enclosed amongst them. The north-western provinces of Shen-see and Shan-see, bordering upon Eastern Tartary, partake in a great degree of its mountainous character. But neither the height nor direction of these great chains has been duly ascertained; though it appears certain that they are interspersed with many rich valleys, and that they do not prevent those countries from being to a considerable degree both populous and cultivated.

On a general survey of those immense ridges which traverse China, we may observe, that not only do they amply contribute to improve the plains beneath, but that their own surface, except in a few instances, scarcely detracts from the general character of productiveness which distinguishes the empire. They are, for the most part, clothed to the very summit with luxuriant shrubs and trees, which, while every level spot is subjected to the spade or the plough, are absolutely requisite for the supply of certain commodities. The majestic forests, for example, which overspread that highest and most rugged chain which crosses the southern provinces, afford the material of a most extensive trade in timber, for fuel as well as for building, to the northern districts. The hills of Quang-tung, of Yun-nan, and above all of Fo-kien, are covered with plantations of tea, furnishing the chief article of foreign trade and domestic luxury. Other species of trees, yielding wood and leaves at once fragrant and ornamental, grow on the mountain-sides in different quarters of the kingdom. These chains, in some places where

the great rivers have forced a passage through them, are shattered into very irregular forms, but are in general covered with verdure and cultivation, and adorned with triumphal arches, pagodas, and other fanciful structures, and are thus made to exhibit a gay and smiling aspect peculiar to themselves.*

But while the mountain-ranges of China are thus extensive and important, it is certain that her immense champaign territory forms a still more grand and characteristic feature. That vast plain, about 1000 miles in length and from 200 to 300 in breadth, which stretches over the greater part of the empire from north to south, has no parallel on the face of the earth ; it is watered by two most majestic rivers, and covered from one extremity to the other with luxuriant harvests and a succession of splendid capitals. It is probable that, as the European embassies have usually passed through this tract, its appearance gave rise to the opinion that China consists of an uninterrupted level. This country is also distinguished, as already stated, by the extent of its water-communications ; so that cargoes can be conveyed without trans-shipment from the vicinity of Pe-king to the foot of the southern mountains. Another remarkable circumstance is the great difference as to temperature and vegetable productions in its upper and lower extremities. It involves the transition from a tropical to an almost arctic climate ; so that one province is covered with rich plantations of rice and sugar-cane, and another bears coarser grains suited to a cold region ; and while the

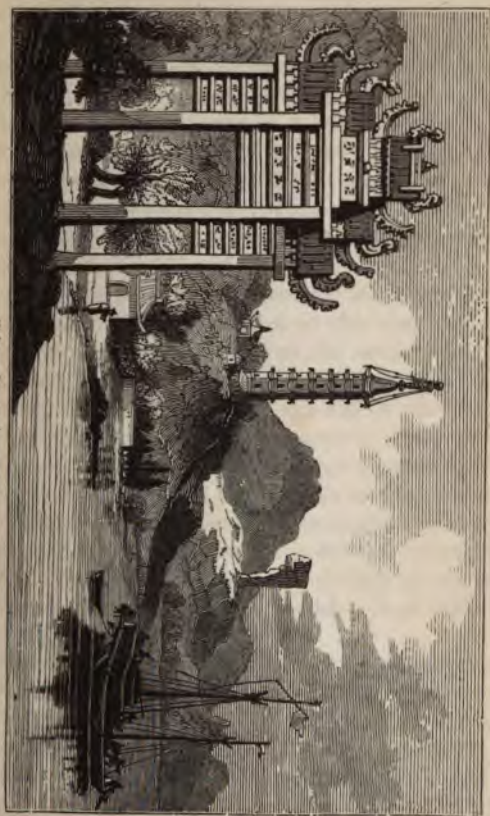
* The annexed Plate is in some degree a composition from several of the drawings brought home by Lord Macartney's embassy, so as to combine the different features which usually distinguish Chinese mountain-scenery.



Chateau de Versailles.

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and various other crops, and while the
the country is a well cultivated one, and while the



Chinese Mountain-scenery.

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groves of the south are perfumed with fragrance, the northern limit is bordered by gloomy pines and stunted shrubs.

Other fine plains, though much less known, and scarcely ever visited by Europeans, add to the wealth of this singular monarchy. The second in magnitude and importance, running parallel to the great one, and divided from it by the ridge of mountains already described, is understood to compose the central provinces of Ho-nan and Hou-quang. It is watered by the two great rivers in their higher course, and appears to be nearly as spacious as the first, containing Kai-fong-fou, and other capitals almost as splendid. It is terminated on the south by the same elevated range; while on the north it gradually rises into the lofty territory of Shan-see. Farther to the west, Se-tchuen, watered by the Yang-tse-kiang and its tributaries, seems to form also a very extended level. The maritime districts of Fo-kien and Tche-kiang consist also of fruitful and beautiful plains, interposed between the ocean and the contiguous hills. Even the southern provinces of Quang-tung and Quang-see, though so mighty a chain runs through them, include a large expanse of fertile land.

Rivers in China form an equally conspicuous feature, and minister in the most remarkable degree to its prosperity. They are fed, not only from its own mountains, but also from the snowy heights of those vast chains which traverse Eastern Tartary. Thence descend the two parallel streams of the Hoang-ho and Yang-tse-kiang, which cross the entire breadth of the empire. The former rises in that cluster of elevated peaks which connects the great

chains of Kwan-lun and Teen-shan, and surround the lake of Kokonor. At first, it flows for a long space in a north-eastern direction, entering the Chinese frontier and then quitting it, till it seems about to lose itself in the wilds of Tartary; then it turns due east, and, after taking a complete southerly course, follows this upwards of 400 miles, and reaches the borders of Ho-nan. It thence rolls a spacious flood, almost due east, through Kiang-nan, and there falls into the Yellow Sea. One of the most remarkable circumstances attending this river is the extraordinary quantity of mud which it conveys to the ocean. In this respect it is equalled only by the Nile; and the waters are thereby so completely discoloured as to cause it to receive the name of the Yellow River. So deep is the tint, that early travellers hesitated not to pronounce that the suspended earth composed one-third of the whole mass of its current. Careful experiments, however, performed by the gentlemen connected with Lord Macartney's embassy, ascertained that it did not exceed a 200th part, while the Nile holds about a 120th. Mr Barrow has, nevertheless, made some curious calculations, according to which the river must pour into its estuary every hour about 2,000,000 solid feet of soil,—a quantity sufficient to raise, in seventy days, an island of a mile square; so that in 24,000 years it would fill up the entire expanse of the Yellow Sea.

The twin stream of the Yang-tse-kiang rises apparently at a source considerably farther south and west; perhaps from the Kwan-lun or boundary-chain of Thibet. For a long space it flows south-south-east, in a direction almost opposite to that of its rival, till it enters the frontier-province of



Entrance into the Huang-Bo.

J. JACKSON

Yun-nan, when the two rivers are separated by nearly the whole breadth of the empire. The Yang-tse-kiang, however, now performs a circuit from south to north, after which it waters and fertilizes the noble provinces of Se-tchuen, Hou-quang, and Kiang-nan. In this course it becomes parallel to the Hoang-ho, and the two continually approach till their mouths are only distant from each other about 100 miles. The Yang-tse-kiang, in this part of its progress, moves indeed with a more majestic current, through still finer and more fruitful regions, bordered too by the most splendid cities, the great seats of interior commerce. The navigation along its broad channel resembles that of the sea; and, on occasion of a high wind and swell, the waves are hardly inferior in height to those of the ocean. When China was divided into two kingdoms, this stream constituted the boundary between them, and the districts immediately adjoining are considered the finest and most populous in the whole country. Along the lower course of both these magnificent waters, the crowds of vessels passing up and down, deeply laden with valuable cargoes or gaily adorned for pleasure,—the numerous towns, of which the more striking edifices are seen stretching several miles along the banks,—the hills covered with villas and rich cultivation,—present a more gorgeous scene perhaps than any other in the world.*

Numerous other rivers, such as might rank with

* To afford an idea of the river-scenery of China, the annexed View of the Entrance into the Hoang-ho has been engraved, by permission, from an original drawing by Mr Alexander, made during Lord Macartney's embassy, and preserved in the Company's collection. In order to show the various forms of Chinese vessels, a few have been altered according to those found in other drawings of the same collection; in other respects the copy is exact.

the Rhine, the Elbe, or the Po, water the different provinces ; but none of them can be compared to those just described. Most of the smaller ones which flow north and south across the great valleys are, after a moderate length of course, received by either of the two great trunks. Others, which irrigate the maritime provinces, taking their rise in the neighbouring mountains, have only the breadth of the intervening plain to traverse before reaching the ocean ; yet, as each of these districts may rank in extent with a European kingdom, the river which fertilizes it, and forms the channel of its commerce, becomes a very important geographical feature. In this secondary class we may particularly mention the Pei-ho, in the metropolitan province of Pe-che-lee, which, while it is subservient to the traffic of the capital, maintains, by its large tributary the Huai-ho, an intercourse with the southern regions. The Kan-kiang, intersecting Kiang-see from south to north, falls into the Yang-tse-kiang after a run of about 400 miles, forming a most important link in the chain of interior navigation. The Hong-kiang, dividing from west to east the plains of Quang-see and Quang-tung, has a course of about 800 miles, reaching the sea at Canton. Yet this city derives still more benefit from the smaller stream of the Pe-kiang, by which it communicates with the central provinces and even the metropolis. The Hoi-ho, after flowing along the whole extent of Shen-see, meets the Hoang-ho as it descends from its northern circuit. Fo-kien and Tche-kiang have each their river, not of great length, but extremely useful to commerce. The value of these waters, moreover, has been wonderfully enhanced

by the canals which unite them ; but an account of these is reserved till we come to treat of the several branches of Chinese industry.

Lakes cannot be considered as prominent objects in the geographical system of China ; yet there are two,—the Tong-ting in Hou-quang, and the Po-yang in Kiang-see,—the former about 250 miles in circuit, the latter nearly half that size. There are also chains of small lakes along the great canal and in other quarters. These sheets of water, and the numerous enclosed bays, are chiefly remarkable for the crowded population which they support, being almost covered with barks and vessels, the inmates of which have no other habitation, and subsist entirely by fishing. In this way, they are nearly as well peopled as the shores on which they border ; but we shall have occasion hereafter to enter into farther details on this curious subject.

Notwithstanding the singular qualities which distinguish the physical geography of China, the chief object of interest is the remarkable people by whom that country is possessed. They have, indeed, laboured to overcome and as it were to obliterate nature,—to bring its boldest scenes under the control of industry and art. Not only has the indigenous vegetation been every where superseded by culture, but the highest mountains have been levelled and terraced almost to their tops ; cities have been built upon them, and extensive ranges of wall erected along their summits. They practise upon a vast scale all the industrial arts, whether rural or manufacturing, and maintain a population the most numerous that is any where united under one system of rule. Five hundred years ago, they were undoubtedly the *most civilized nation* on earth, with the

doubtful exception of the Hindoos ; and if the latter display intellectual powers of a higher order, the attainments of the Chinese appear to be more substantial and practical. Since that time, indeed, the Europeans, by their rapid advances in science, and in the arts both useful and ornamental, have far surpassed all the inhabitants of the East. Still the Chinese seem fully entitled to stand next in order, while they have the additional right to boast of a much more ancient improvement. Their civilisation, too, has been developed under peculiar forms, altogether differing from those which are presented by the nations of the West. This dissimilarity is perhaps as wide as can possibly exist between two races of beings having the same common nature and wants. A people, among whom inventions which are esteemed the pride of modern Europe,—the compass, gunpowder, printing,—were known and practised many centuries earlier,—who probably amount to more than two hundred millions* united in one system of manners, letters, and polity,—who in every province have towns that rival the greatest capitals in our part of the world,—who have not only covered every spot of earth with inhabitants, but have streets and cities on the waters,—such a nation must indeed occupy a conspicuous place in the history of mankind ; and the study of their institutions cannot fail to throw an important light on the progress and arrangement of the social system.

* Several statements, particularly that given to Lord Macartney's embassy, and the recent one published by Mr Morrison, junior, make it much larger, amounting even to 333 or 367 millions. But we confess ourselves still sceptical upon this point, and shall take a future opportunity of collecting and endeavouring to estimate the various and contradictory reports on this interesting subject.

CHAPTER II.

Ancient History of China.

Antiquity of Chinese Records—Mode of preparing them—One Emperor attempts to destroy them—Means by which they were recovered—Principal Works and European Translations—Interest attached to a general Summary—Fabulous History—Disregarded by the Chinese—Rude early State of the Empire—Arts invented by the first Emperors—The Art of Writing—Measures to prevent Inundation—Yao, Chun, and Yu—Adventures of the Empress Min and her Son—Enormities of Li-koué and Mey-hi—Dynasty of Yu subverted—Succeeded by that of Chang—General Character of this Dynasty—Some able Princes—Ruined under Cheou-sin—Dynasty of Tcheou—Rise of the feudal Principalities—Dreadful Series of Civil War—Flourishing State of Letters and Philosophy—Internal Wars suppressed, and the Tsin Dynasty founded—Chi-hoang-ti crushes the feudal Power, and converts China into an absolute Monarchy—His Persecution of the Learned—His Dynasty soon succeeded by that of Han.

THE history of China, long entirely unconnected with the Western nations, has excited less of our attention than that of countries with which we have maintained a closer intercourse. It possesses, nevertheless, a deep and in some respects even a peculiar interest. It includes an almost uninterrupted series of annals for upwards of 4000 years, commencing at an era coeval with the rise of the Egyptian and Assyrian monarchies. Nor do these memorials, like those of Europe, exhibit alternate ages of greatness and decline, of refinement and barbarism; they present a vast empire ascending, by gradual steps, from the first rude elements of the social state, to a very considerable pitch of civilisation and improvement. No

other records, except such as are contained in the Sacred Volume, give an account of human society at so early a stage.

History appears to have been an object of peculiar attention to the Chinese monarchs and sages at a remote period. Regular arrangements were made, under the authority of the state, for transmitting public events to future times. In the literary tribunal, or rather board, called Han-lin, one of the chief departments,—the qualifications of whose members are determined by a minute examination,—is exclusively devoted to the composition of the national annals. They are written in the first instance on loose sheets, which are introduced through an aperture into an official bureau,* never opened unless by express orders from the sovereign. Being thus prepared originally by the government, they are not destined for general perusal. But, according to Grosier, such care is taken to secure impartiality, that the events of an emperor's reign are never reduced into an historical shape, till all his descendants have died, and the throne has passed to another dynasty. Though this statement seems to have obtained credit, it is nevertheless difficult to believe that a royal family would thus anticipate its own extinction, and not rather look forward with some hope of perpetuity. It, however, usually happens that the founder of a new race, having no motive to conceal the actions of the one which preceded, and finding, probably, in the conduct of the rulers with whom it closed, grounds for having wrested the sceptre from them, becomes inclined to sanction the publication. It ap-

* Grosier, *Histoire Generale de la Chine* (13 vols 4to, Paris, 1777), vol. i. Pref. pp. ii. iii.

pears certain, too, that these records cannot be tampered with, and are never seen even by the emperor. The history mentions one instance of the request being made, when it was successfully resisted by the Board, who urged that there was no precedent of a similar demand.

Some clouds, it must be confessed, hang over the remoter eras of the Chinese people. Confucius, the most illustrious of their sages, from an inspection of early records, compiled the work called the Shoo-king, which has always been held by them in the profoundest veneration. But 213 years before Christ, the Emperor Chi-hoang-ti having conceived the design of new-modelling the whole system of national policy, and entertaining a great dislike to literature, issued a decree that all its existing annals should be committed to the flames. This mandate was executed with the most despotic rigour; and it was believed that the Shoo-king, with all the other histories of China, had disappeared from the earth.* But, about sixty years after, a new ruler, possessed of more enlightened views, anxiously sought to repair this heavy loss; and eager search was made throughout the country for the sacred compilation. A very old man, named Fou-seng, was at length found, who, having committed the work to memory, was able to recite it; but his voice was intelligible only to his daughter, through whose medium a great part was written down. Afterwards, in rebuilding the house formerly inhabited by Confucius, there was discovered a much larger portion, the accuracy of which was confirmed by its coincidence with what had been procured from Fou-seng's

* Grosier, vol. i. Pref. p. viii.

recitation.* Soon after, the Emperor Han-ou-ti proclaimed a reward to all who should procure authentic materials relative to the early times of their country; imagining that these must have existed in such abundance as to render it next to impossible that they should have wholly perished. China had just before been partitioned into a variety of little states, each of which had its chronicle connected with the general proceedings of the empire. Among the numerous memoirs brought forward on this occasion, Gaubil specifies the Y-king, or commentaries upon the Koua, the Shi-king, or collections of ancient poetry, the works of Confucius, Mencius, and other philosophers; all of whom, imbued with a profound reverence for antiquity, made frequent allusions to the events of primitive times. An academy was appointed to examine and verify the documents collected; two illustrious persons, Sse-ma-tan and his son Sse-ma-tsien, were employed, partly in drawing from them a confirmation of the Shoo-king, and partly in supplying its deficiencies. The defenders of that work refer also to an eclipse of the sun stated to have occurred in 2159, B. C., and for their failure in predicting which two astronomers were put to death. This phenomenon, it is said, according to the tables of Halley, really ought to have taken place at the period specified; but the grounds of this conclusion, vehemently contested by Freret, have given rise to a voluminous controversy into which we decline to enter.† Independently of it, however, there seems

* Grosier, Pref. p. ix.-xii.

† Grosier, pp. lix. xcv.-c. *Mémoires concernant les Chinois*, par les Missionnaires de Pekin (16 vols 18mo, Paris, 1776-1814), vol. ii. p. 104-10.

sufficient reason to conclude, that the records of China, even prior to the barbarous mandate of Chi-hoang-ti, though defective and perhaps somewhat garbled, rest generally on an authentic basis.

Subsequently to this period, the records of the empire were continued in a regular series, and successive works were produced, particularly by Pan-kou, and his accomplished sister Tsao-ta-kou. But that which acquired the highest reputation was the Tse-tchi-tong-kien, or "True Mirror which aids in governing well a State." It was composed by an association of learned men, and formed a complete history, from the year 208 before, to 960 after the Christian era, with an introductory view of events from the foundation of the monarchy. Its value is considered to have been greatly enhanced about 100 years afterwards, by a summary drawn up by the erudite Tchu-hi, called the Kang-mou, which was thenceforth considered as the text, to which the original served as a commentary. The whole was then named the Tong-kien-kang-mou. About the middle of the seventeenth century, Kang-hi, an illustrious and enlightened prince, sprung from the conquering race of the Mantchoo Tartars, desirous of affording to his original subjects a knowledge of the country which they had subdued, caused this great body of facts to be translated into their tongue. While the work was proceeding, Mailla, a Jesuit missionary, who happened to reside at Pe-king, and understood the language into which this version was made, undertook the meritorious task of turning it into French. His manuscript was transmitted to Europe in 1737; but, in consequence of the subversion of his Order and other unfavourable cir-

cumstances, it remained in the library at Lyons till the year 1777, when it was published by the industrious Abbé Grosier in thirteen volumes quarto.

In the general view now to be given of the Chinese annals, this work will supply the principal facts; while some additional light will be thrown on the subject by Amiot,* Gaubil,† De Guignes,‡ Du Halde, and a few other writers.

Though this publication formed an important accession to historical science, its great extent has not only prevented it from becoming popular, but has been considered by the learned as disproportionate, not, indeed, to the magnitude of the subject, but to the interest which it was calculated to excite in a European reader. It has, therefore, remained in a great measure dormant. Hence a general survey, not of mere names and dates, but of the steps by which the empire rose to greatness, the revolutions that shook and overthrew its dynasties, and the striking events by which its story was diversified, will be new, perhaps, to the great majority of our readers. It will soon appear that the annals of China do not exhibit, as is commonly supposed, a uniform and monotonous aspect; but that they are chequered by as striking vicissitudes as those of almost any other nation; and are peculiarly calculated to throw light on the social and political progress of the human species. The review of them

* *Antiquité des Chinois*, in *Mémoires concernant les Chinois*, vol. ii.; and *Abrégé chronologique de l'Histoire Universelle de l'Empire de la Chine*, *ibid.* vol. xiii.

† *Chronologie Chinoise* (edited by Silvestre de Sacy), Paris, 1814, 1 vol. 4to.

‡ *Histoire des Huns, &c.* (5 vols 4to, Paris, 1756), vol. i. parts i. and ii.

will therefore afford suitable materials for estimating the genius and disposition of this great people, and will go far to dispel the illusion which ascribes to them an immutable character, distinct from that of the rest of mankind.

The origin of the Chinese, like that of other Asiatic nations, is lost in the depths of the most remote antiquity, and has become the subject of lengthened and doubtful discussion. Sir William Jones has endeavoured to prove, that they are the descendants of the Cshatryas, or military caste in Hindostan, called Chinas. But we agree with Mr Barrow in thinking, that this hypothesis, as well as those which trace their extraction to the Egyptians or the Jews, are scarcely deserving of a serious refutation. We concur also with this able writer in preferring the opinion which assigns to the Chinese a Tartar, or rather Mongolian lineage. The form and prominent features of the countenance are in both nearly similar, and strikingly different from those of any other race. If, indeed, according to the most authentic records, we refer the origin of human society to the banks of the Euphrates, it may at first appear singular, that the tribes migrating into China should not have proceeded rather through the fine plains of India than the barren tracts of Scythia. But we must observe, that by the former route they could not reach their present dwelling except by scaling the most precipitous mountains on the globe,—Caucasus and Himmaleh,—while, by proceeding across Persia, through Khorasan, Western Tartary, and Mongolia, they would arrive by a path almost uniformly level ; for Humboldt seems to have clearly ascertained, that the vast region interposed be-

tween the Altaian and the Teen-shan or Celestial Mountains, is not, like the table-land of Thibet, shut in on the west by a lofty ridge, but is open on that side to the wide plain of Western Tartary. Accordingly, the ancient records very distinctly state that the north-western province of Shen-see,*—the one immediately bordering on the Mongol territories,—was the cradle of their nation and monarchy.

The Chinese have a fabulous chronology similar to that of the Hindoos, and almost equally extravagant. It includes dynasties of monarchs,—the Tien-hoang and the Ti-hoang,—each of whom held the sceptre during 18,000 years; but after this their lives dwindled to so narrow a span that the reigns of nine monarchs are comprehended in 45,600 years. The ten *kis*, or ages, which elapsed from Pan-kou, the first man, to Confucius, is variously estimated from 276,000 years to 96,961,740. These eras may certainly vie with those assigned in the Vedas and Puranas. There is, however, this important distinction, that while the successive Hindoo yugs, or ages, extending to millions of years, form the sacred chronology of that people, the Chinese treat their own fabulous records, not only with contempt, as puerile and ridiculous, but with horror, as profane. They were the work of the Tao-tse, a monkish and superstitious sect who sprang up in defiance of government, by whom even they were generally persecuted. We shall not, therefore, enter upon the story of the Tien-hoang, or emperors of heaven; the Ti-hoang, or emperors of earth; nor even of the Jin-hoang, or emperors of men; who filled the throne during the mysterious

* Grosier, vol. i. p. 1.

course of those early ages.* In the summary given by Amiot, they are represented as working miracles, forming political institutions, teaching all the arts of life, and even writing books.† The first dawn of authentic history commences with the government of Fou-hi, in 2953, B. C.,—a period which accords sufficiently with the best-established chronologies. But even then the imperfection of their dates is marked by a succession of nine emperors in about 750 years. It is not till the accession of Yu, of the Hia dynasty, that reigns of the ordinary and natural duration indicate that their narrative is at length placed on a solid basis; and here commences the recovered part of the Shoo-king, already mentioned as the earliest classic record of China.

Although the annals, even from Fou-hi to Yu, are thus manifestly tinged with fable, they perhaps convey a tolerably correct idea of what the country then was, and of the earliest steps in her social and political progress. The extremely rude state in which the people are described, though probable in itself, is so little flattering to their overweening pride, that it is not very likely to have been the spontaneous offspring of their fancy.

The Chinese, when they first settled in the province of Shen-see, are said to have been almost complete savages. They subsisted solely on the natural fruits of the earth, and on the raw flesh of animals killed in hunting, the skins of which, without any preparation, formed their only clothing. They were strangers to all the arts, to every form of social union, and to every idea which could raise the man

* *Mémoires concernant les Chinois*, vol. xiii. pp. 181, 182.

† *Ibid.* pp. 192, 193.

above the brute. But the means by which they were initiated in the useful arts, and gradually rose to that measure of improvement which gave them so distinguished a place among the oriental nations, form the chief theme of their early history. In this retrospect the most remarkable circumstance is, that the prince is commemorated as the sole inventor and teacher of every science and every craft; from observing the heavens to tilling the ground, and from preparing the machinery of war to the framing of musical instruments. Although it is impossible, in these representations, not to suspect some disposition to flatter the throne, yet it really appears, by recent observations respecting the chiefs both of Africa and the South Sea Islands, that sovereigns in this early stage of society take the lead in many concerns, which are afterwards advantageously left to the zeal or ingenuity of private individuals. As the narrative becomes more modern, we find the monarch employing such of his subjects as he considers best qualified, in making the arrangements which seem most suitable in the different branches of national economy. In remote times, however, it is obvious that China was not governed upon those despotic principles which afterwards acquired so complete an ascendancy. There is nowhere, indeed, any trace of republican institutions; but in all the earliest successions the crown is represented as decidedly and purely elective. On a vacancy occurring, the people assembled and chose the person whom they judged best fitted to reign, and who was usually a minister, not a son, of the deceased monarch.

There appear, even previous to Fou-hi, to have been two real kings, Yeou-tsao-chi and Soui-gin-chi,

under whom some progress was made in the arts of life. During the time of the former, the people, who had previously lodged in caverns, or beneath the shade of trees, were taught to pluck down branches, and construct a species of rude huts. Soui-gin-chi made a step towards the formation of permanent records, by the use of knots tied upon a small string,—a process seemingly analogous to that of the *quipos* of Peru. He instructed the people in the benefits conferred on them by the Deity, and their obligations to honour and obey him. The statement, however, in the apocryphal histories, of his having ordered the affairs of the empire to be committed to writing is evidently absurd;* though it is probable that the knots may have been employed as an imperfect mode of preserving the memory of public events. He exerted himself to establish public markets, and promote traffic by barter. But the most important incident in this reign was the discovery of fire. According to the best accounts, this element was first observed as arising from the friction occasioned by cutting down trees. As soon as the flame was noticed, means were devised for preserving it; and it was in due time adapted to the purposes of cookery.

Fou-hi, the favourite minister of Soui-gin-chi, was chosen by acclamation to succeed him, and is generally revered as the founder of regular government and civilisation in China. He colonized the provinces of Ho-nan and Shan-tung, as far as the Eastern Sea. But his energies were chiefly exerted in promoting the useful arts, and creating the first elements of letters and science. Having employed fire to clear away a part of the forests with which

* Mémoires, vol. xiii. p. 199.

the territory was overspread, he applied it next to fuse the iron, which appeared in some places at the surface of the ground. This valuable metal was soon converted into arms and other implements. The same emperor is said to have taught the art of rearing and training domestic animals, and thus gradually withdrew the people from the condition of hunters to the pursuits of a pastoral and agricultural life. But his memory is chiefly revered for his efforts to originate some mode of committing ideas to writing. Yet all he was able to effect was the Koua, consisting simply of eight lines, varying in length, and constructed in imitation of those which appear on the back of a dragon. These being arranged into clusters of two and two, formed sixty-four combinations, capable of expressing that number of ideas. This work has been an object of the deepest veneration among the Chinese, who believe it to possess such a spiritual and mysterious virtue as to contain all things in itself. Even the great Confucius made it the subject of an elaborate commentary; and yet its whole merit seems to consist in being the first approach to an art of such vast importance as that of literary composition.

Fou-hi is said to have established the inviolability of marriage,—an engagement which before had been little more than temporary. He not only instructed the people in their duties to the Tien, or Supreme Being, but made an annual offering of the fruits of the earth, at which he presided in person. He bestowed considerable attention upon practical astronomy, with a view to the computation of years and seasons. To him Mailla's authorities ascribe the invention of the cycle of sixty, by which not only

minutes, but hours, days, and years, have been always measured ; though Amiot considers that the greater weight of testimony assigns this arrangement to Hoang-ti.* Nor did he disdain to provide for his people the recreation afforded by musical instruments, of which he is considered the inventor. This art, however, which never made much progress in the nation, exhibits itself under a very imperfect form in these imperial contrivances. They consist merely of rude combinations of strings, bells, and barrels, ornamented with the heads of wild animals.

Fou-hi was succeeded by Chin-nong ; for though some historians interpolate no less than fifteen intermediate princes,† the best authors consider these as merely deputies or lieutenants under the emperor. He rendered his reign memorable by introducing tillage, which, like other improvements, is represented as emanating entirely from the sovereign. He selected, it is said, the species of grain best fitted for human use, and taught his subjects to clear the ground and construct a plough similar to that used at the present day, which is in fact very imperfect. He exerted himself also in establishing markets, and promoting the exchange of commodities between the different parts of his dominions. So carefully, too, did he study the virtues and qualities of plants, that medicine under him assumed the form of a science. In old age, however, he sunk into a degree of dotage, of which advantage was taken by several of his officers to raise insurrections, and Souan-yuen succeeded in driving him from the throne, and occupying his place.

* *Mémoires*, vol. xiii. p. 230.

† *Ibid.* p. 219.

This person, under the name of Hoang-ti, became one of the most illustrious of the Chinese monarchs. After having established himself on the throne, and vanquished a formidable rival, he devoted his cares almost solely to the arts of peace, and raised them to such a height that the empire began to assume a civilized aspect. He invented weights and measures ; he taught the first principles of arithmetic ; and he formed the finer metals into an imperfect species of coin. Wagons were constructed, and animals employed in drawing them ; lighter carriages were contrived for the convenience of travelling ; boats were employed in navigating rivers, and bridges built for crossing them. Huts, formed of boughs, had till then been the habitation alike of the prince and the peasant ; now bricks were substituted, as well for private as for public buildings. The mansions became more spacious, and Hoang-ti reared one for himself, which might be termed a palace. Observing the beautiful material produced by the silkworm, he suggested to the ladies of his family that it might possibly be converted into a dress more elegant and commodious than could be afforded by the skins of animals. He and his successor, indulging that propensity to minute legislation which prevails in the rude states of society, appointed to the public servants, according to their rank and office, the colours of their respective garments. These were to imitate the tints of the sky or of the earth, and the ornaments worked upon them were to be the figures of such creatures as had some resemblance in their dispositions or qualities to the official duties of the wearer. To bring the calendar into a regular shape became also a primary object. Scientific men were

appointed to observe the motions of the sun, the moon, and the planets, representations of which were laid before the emperor. They soon discovered the difference between the lunar and the solar year ; and arrangements were made for obviating the confusion which had arisen from assigning to the latter period twelve revolutions of the moon.

But the most important improvement effected by Hoang-ti arose from his attempts, however imperfect, to create for the Chinese a written language. This task was intrusted to the learned Tsang-kie, who, happening to walk along the banks of a river, observed on the sand numerous footsteps of birds. With a pencil dipped in a species of varnish, he contrived to copy the lines formed by these impressions and frame others like them. He delineated in this manner 540 characters, with which he undertook to represent the various objects of nature and art. Hence originated the Chinese system of writing, whose design, from which it has never wholly deviated, was to draw the outline of every thing which it meant to express. After all these important discoveries, Hoang-ti's glory would have been incomplete, had he not also distinguished himself as a musical inventor. He framed instruments of a more complex character than those of Fou-hi ; and, by the use of tubes of various dimensions, established the principles on which a complete organ might be constructed. He even drew from these the models upon which he formed his weights and measures. Lastly, this monarch, who had ascended the throne by his prowess in war, applied himself more diligently than any of his predecessors to improve the national armoury. The bow and

arrow, the sabre, the helmet, are described as of his invention ; while to each corps he attached standards, rudely adorned with the figures of various animals.

He is said to have exercised his authority with strictness and even with rigour ; and being at the same time esteemed for his beneficent institutions and attention to the duties of government, he raised the imperial power to a height before unequalled. The principle of hereditary succession, till now scarcely recognised, was regularly introduced, and never after wholly disregarded. The people, however, though they adhered to the royal family, continued for some time to select from its members the individual whom they judged best fitted to reign.

Acting under these views, on the death of Hoang-ti, they raised to the throne Chao-hao, the son whom they deemed most worthy of it. The new prince for some time promoted the improvements introduced by his father, but afterwards yielded himself to the voluptuous indolence incident to men born to power, and neglected the most important affairs of the empire. Historians particularly reproach him with having tolerated a certain superstition destined ever after to disturb the public mind, and which appears to be that of the Tao-tse. The governors of nine provinces, having recourse to the powers of magic, exhibited to the ignorant multitude a kind of hideous spectres, to which they were actually induced to pay a species of religious worship. But whether these representations were produced by optical illusion or by painting cannot now be ascertained.

Chao-hao, though despised, was allowed to hold

the sceptre till his death, when the people, determining not blindly to attach themselves to the succession, elected Tchuen-hio, one of his nephews. They were satisfied with him, and with Ti-ko, grandson of Chao-hao, whom they next chose. These two reigns are described as prosperous, though they were not distinguished by any remarkable events. Some farther improvements were made on the calendar, always considered as one of the most important of national objects.

On the death of Ti-ko, the people, in reverence to his memory, raised to the throne his eldest son Titchi, who, however, was soon judged wholly incapable of governing; and, accordingly, after he had been endured nine years, his younger brother Yao, though only sixteen, was substituted in his place. The reign of this prince being considered one of the most auspicious in the Chinese annals, he is ranked among the leading founders of the empire. He distinguished himself by exertions for the good of his subjects, though he made no such grand inventions as had illustrated his predecessors. Measures were taken, on a greater scale than ever, for the completion of the calendar; learned men being sent to the four extremities of the kingdom, and even southward into Cochin-China, to make the necessary observations. But the object with which his mind was chiefly occupied, was to remedy the inundations of the large rivers, by which much of the country was desolated. These occasionally rose to such a height, that in some narratives they are represented as a flood, overspreading the whole land.* The task of

* De Guignes, vol. i. p. 7.

embanking or deepening them was confided to an officer named Pe-koen, who, however, having more pretension than sound judgment, was found, after expending much labour, to have made very little progress. The emperor was then advised to employ Chun, a descendant of Hoang-ti, though reduced to an obscure condition, who, after a modest hesitation, undertook the charge ; but his chief merit seems to have been in discovering the great talents of Yu, the son of Pe-koen, also descended from Hoang-ti, and to him the whole of this vast undertaking was soon committed. Yu, by deepening the beds of the rivers, opening new channels, and sometimes by changing their course, delivered the country from this calamity. Having thus raised himself to high confidence, he was employed to survey all the provinces, to register the qualities of the soil, to instruct the people in the best modes of culture, and to fix the amount of tribute.

Yao, after a long reign, feeling the infirmities of age, determined to devolve the cares of empire upon this patriotic individual ; he even proposed to invest him with its dignities ; but these the modesty of the other induced him to decline, so long as his master lived.

On the death of the sovereign, however, in preference to Tan-tchu his son, Chun was called to the throne ; and the satisfaction which his reign afforded was in a great measure due to his judicious choice of ministers, particularly of Yu as governor-general. After having ruled thirty-three years, he nominated this distinguished person as his associate and successor, who, on the death of Chun, was accordingly called to the throne by the voice and con-

currence of the nation. He offered to waive his claim in favour of a son of the preceding emperor; but the nobles and public officers insisted upon overruling this proposal.

The accession of the dynasty of Yu, or of Hia (as it was named, from a territory of which he had become possessed), forms a remarkable era in Chinese history. The throne, which hitherto had been more or less elective, became from this period hereditary in the eldest son, with only those occasional and violent interruptions to which every despotic government is liable. The national annals, too, assume a more regular and authentic shape; the reigns of the sovereigns being at the same time reduced to a probable duration. Public events are given in fuller detail; though, it must be confessed, they lose somewhat of that peculiar interest which arose by the transition from a state of barbarism to one of comparative civilisation. The Chinese empire had already taken that position and form which, with some variations and vicissitudes, it has ever since retained.

Yu justly acquired a lasting veneration; but it was chiefly by his labours under his two predecessors. When he himself ascended the throne, age had already overtaken him; still the lustre of his government was supported by able counsellors, till it closed with his life at the end of seven years. Many of the grandees wished, according to former practice, to raise to the throne Pe-y, his first minister, and a person of distinguished merit; but regard for the father in this case was strengthened by the excellent qualities of his son Ti-ki; and even Pe-y insisted that the prince should be preferred to himself. Hia

reign was only disturbed by the rebellion of a turbulent governor, and he was succeeded without opposition by his son Tai-kang. But this youth had most of the faults incident to one born in power. He was devoted to pleasure ; music, wine, and hunting, entirely engrossed his attention. The Chinese had too much spirit to consent to be governed by such a ruler : Tai-kang was dethroned ; though, as the attachment to the Hia dynasty was still strong, Tchong-kang, his brother, was nominated to succeed. This prince held the reins of government thirteen years with a vigorous hand, and was followed by his son Ti-siang, a mild and amiable person, but destitute of the vigour which his situation required. Ye, his minister, who had gained his entire confidence (seconded by an accomplice named Han-tsou), declared him incapable of reigning, and assumed the power and title of emperor. Seven years after, the usurper was killed, and, as was suspected, by Han-tsou, who, however, strenuously denied the crime, and even formed a combination with Kiao, son to the deceased, to crush Ti-siang. That monarch, who had still many adherents, contrived to assemble an army, and met the traitors ; but he was completely defeated, and, with two of his firmest friends, fell in the action. The victors immediately marched to the capital, entered the palace, and made so general a massacre of the family, that they believed the name and race of Yu to be for ever extinguished. They were deceived ; the Empress Min, in this calamity of her house, fled to a remote city, where, in a place of concealment, she brought forth a son named Chao-kang. The better to conceal his origin, she employed him, as a shepherd-boy, to tend flocks on

the neighbouring mountains. Reports of the existence of such a youth, and of his occupation, at length reached the ears of Han-tsou, now in possession of the imperial sceptre, and who sent orders to bring him dead or alive. The royal widow then withdrew her child from the pastoral life, and placed him as under-cook in the household of a neighbouring governor. Here the lad soon distinguished himself by a spirit and temper so superior to this humble station that the master's suspicions were roused, and he at length obliged or induced him to disclose his name and birth. This officer, however, as the empress well knew, was devotedly attached to the house of Hia: he therefore not only kept the secret, but eagerly watched for an opportunity to restore the youth to the throne of his ancestors. He gave him a small government in a remote situation, which he administered with a prudence that gained him great reputation. Yet he was more than thirty years old before the governor, by engaging other chiefs in his interest, could assemble such a force as might justify the attempt to make head against the usurper. The latter, on hearing that their army was on its march, hastily assembled his troops, and led them to the attack, before the reverence which they still cherished for the memory of the great Yu could operate in shaking their fidelity. At the first onset, Ti-chou, the prince's son, at the head of a chosen band of three hundred, dashed into the heart of the enemy, seized Han-tsou himself, and carried him off prisoner; upon which his followers, dismayed and deprived of their leader, took to a precipitate flight. The scattered divisions spread in different directions, and, after several other combats, were

completely dispersed. Chao-kang, with his revered mother, then entered the capital, and was crowned amid the general acclamations of the people.

The empire, under the successive reigns of Chao-kang and the gallant Ti-chou, was well and ably administered ; but of the other sovereigns, who followed in the course of more than a century, several abandoned themselves to indolence and pleasure, which greatly diminished the reverence paid to the imperial name. At length the throne was occupied by Li-koué, a prince who is represented as having surpassed the enormities of Nero and Caligula. He found a congenial spirit in his bride, Mey-hi, a young lady of surprising beauty, daughter to a turbulent chief. These two royal persons practised every kind of violence and extortion in order to accumulate treasure, which they spent in unbridled voluptuousness. They formed, it is said, a large pond, which they filled so deep with wine, that a boat could float in it, and three thousand men drink at once of the precious contents. It was surrounded, too, by lofty pyramids of the most delicate viands, which no one, however, was allowed to taste till he had first intoxicated himself out of the lake. The drunken quarrels and conflicts which ensued were the favourite amusement of the imperial couple. In the interior of the palace, which was profusely adorned with ivory and gems, were celebrated orgies in which all decorum was violated ; while the wise and venerable ministers who attempted to remonstrate against these excesses, were either put to death or driven into exile. The people, it is said, were at once indignant and grieved at crimes by which they foresaw that the dynasty of Yu, for which

they entertained a sincere affection, was about to be extinguished. All eyes were turned to Tching-tang, the most esteemed of the local governors ; but he at first refused to engage in any enterprise against a prince descended of a family so much revered. At length, the increasing clamours of the public, and the solicitations of Y-yn, who had been prime minister to the infatuated emperor, overcame his reluctance. He assembled a force and marched against Li-koué, who, being at the head of a greatly superior army, advanced in full confidence of success. When the moment of conflict arrived, however, it soon appeared on what a hollow basis his power had rested. The greater part of his troops went over to the enemy ; the rest dispersed ; and he himself fled to a remote corner, where he died three years after, universally despised and deserted.

Tching-tang next ascended the vacant throne, and, moreover, founded the second dynasty, which, from his patrimonial domains, received the name of Chang. It continued 644 years, commencing 1766, and ending 1122, before our era ; yet its records are meagre ; nor does the condition of the country, or the character or degree of its civilisation, appear to have undergone any very material change. The chief innovation appeared in the growing power of the grandees or provincial rulers, who, having rendered their offices hereditary, held nearly the position of the great barons in the feudal ages. They had become almost independent sovereigns, contenting themselves with paying, not very regularly, homage and a small tribute to the head of the empire. Poan-keng (1401-1373) and Ou-ting or Cao-tsong (1324-1265), two wise and able princes, succeeded,

by firm yet mild measures, in arresting the progress of this evil, and in repressing these turbulent deputies within some degree of order. But during the weak and voluptuous reigns of Tsou-keng, Tsou-kia, and their successors, anarchy and insubordination again began to increase. The able government of Taiting, having unfortunately lasted only three years, could not stem the tide, which acquired force under the amiable but too easy Ti-y. At length the dynasty of Chang reached its crisis in the time of Cheou-sin, a prince possessed of vigour both of body and mind, but rash, violent, and addicted to pleasure. Again it is an empress to whom the Chinese impute the fall of a long and illustrious race of monarchs. His spouse, the beautiful but wicked Tan-ki, by her attractions and a congenial disposition, having obtained an entire sway over his mind, impelled him to enormities which even outdid those of Li-koué and his consort. After erecting a marble palace of vast extent, with gates of jasper, which occupied ten years in building, they abandoned themselves to shameless dissoluteness. To punish those who presumed to check their inclination, the most horrid refinements of cruelty were invented. They formed a brazen pillar, hollow in the middle, filled it with burning coals, and covered the surface with pitch and resinous substances. This they compelled the objects of their resentment to embrace; and, coming to witness their agonizing death, testified their savage delight by bursts of laughter. In vain were remonstrances made by the wisest and most respectable ministers, who, in consequence of their boldness, were either assassinated or obliged to flee into distant exile.

While the emperor and empress were thus rendering themselves the objects of universal abhorrence, a new power had risen and was making rapid advances in popularity. About two centuries before, Cou-kong, a prince of illustrious birth, being a descendant of Ti-ko, and consequently of Hoang-ti, had retired to a western district on the mountainous border of Tartary. There he founded a little state, which he governed with such wisdom that emigrants were attracted from every quarter. His power became extensive, and his reputation spread throughout China. His successor, Ki-lie, distinguished by his valour, was employed as a commander under several of the best emperors. Ou-en-ouang, the next prince of Tcheou, was equally eminent for wisdom and the protecting care which he exercised over his people. To him are ascribed some improvements in the art of writing, which seems to have been long stationary; and his compositions are still held in higher veneration than those of any other author prior to Confucius. He and his son, Ou-ouang, who inherited many of his great qualities, were viewed by the nation in general with the most devoted attachment. These chiefs long hesitated to take arms against their master; at length Ou-ouang, after his father's death, considering the measure of his country's wrongs as full, took the field. He led against Cheou-sin an army which, though inferior in number, was so much braver, that the imperial troops gave way at the first shock and fled in confusion. The sovereign, that he might not fall into the hands of his enemy, shut himself up in his palace with his most precious jewels and set it on fire. The conqueror regretted this catastrophe, and

received with clemency Ou-keng, the prince; but when Tan-ki, the empress, came out in a splendid attire to propitiate his favour, he ordered her to be seized and put to death.

Ou-ouang founded the third dynasty which, from his original dominions, was called the Tcheou, and held sway for no less than 873 years (1122-249, B. C.) It derived lustre from his character, and that of Tching-ouang, his immediate successor; yet, on the whole, it occupied one of the most distracted and calamitous periods in the annals of the Chinese empire. The new ruler found it necessary to give his sanction to the pretensions which had been already advanced and acted upon by the great princes and feudatories; and they were declared independent, with the exception of homage, service in war, and a moderate tribute. He has been much censured for yielding to these claims, but it is probable that some such concessions could no longer be avoided. These territorial governors had for a considerable time enjoyed hereditary power; they boasted a descent from the ancient dynasties as high as that of the monarch himself,—from Hoang-ti, Chin-nong, Yao, Chun, Yu,—names the most revered in the empire. All of them soon afterwards assumed the title of kings, and the provinces under the immediate rule of the emperor were allowed only the title of the Middle Kingdom. The evils thus occasioned were much aggravated by Tartar invasion, which, under this dynasty, began to afflict the borders. Both the northern and western hordes commenced their ravages; and the latter, in their first inroads, gained some signal victories. When indeed the strength of the empire was collected, it proved more than suffi-

cient to repel these rude assailants ; but when followed into their native deserts, they eluded all pursuit, and the victors could find nothing except the wild beasts by which they were tenanted.

China at this time seems to have been distracted, not only by the lofty pretensions of its princes, but by the discontent of the people, which, under Li-ouang, was heightened by the violent measures taken for its suppression. On this subject a minister addressed to his sovereign the following advice, which may deserve the serious consideration of princes in general :—" An emperor knows how to govern, when he leaves poets at liberty to make verses, the populace to act plays, historians to tell the truth, the ministers to give advice, the poor to murmur while they pay taxes, students to repeat their lessons aloud, the people to talk of news, and old men to find fault with every thing,—affairs then go on without much inconvenience."

Under Ping-ouang, about 750, B. C., began that dreadful era characterized by the wars of the tributary princes, which lasted, with short intervals, 500 years. During all this time, China, which we have been accustomed to view as a peaceful region under the absolute sway of one ruler, was partitioned into a multitude of petty states, and agitated by the most furious intestine commotion. At the earliest stage of this epoch it was divided among twenty-one governors, eight of whom were descendants of Tcheou ; but these last, instead of uniting together and supporting their head, like the others, were occupied only with their individual interests. It would prove very uninteresting to follow the Chinese historians through the chaos of civil conflict and revolu-

tion which filled this protracted interval. At length the warlike and terrible Tchao-siang-ouang, having gained a succession of victories, reduced under his sole sway almost all the turbulent potentates; leaving to his brother, Tchuang-siang-ouang, the glory of extinguishing the dynasty of Tcheou, and of founding one which, from his native possessions, was named Tsin.

It would be improper, however, to pass over this period without noticing the remarkable fact, that letters and the intellectual powers, instead of being neglected amid these scenes of confusion, were cultivated with an ardour, and rose to a height, which they had never before reached. Kong-fou-tse (Confucius) and Meng-tse (Mencius) in particular attained unrivalled eminence. Their works gave to the Chinese mind the stamp which it has since retained; having ever been considered as the rule of action and the fountain of wisdom. The appearance of such men at this turbulent epoch may at first view excite surprise; yet it is not inconsistent with the general train of human events. A uniform tenor of life, and monotonous circle of objects, are by no means favourable to the development of the higher faculties of the understanding. Amid sudden changes and revolutions, attended by striking scenes, the powers of thought and invention are roused. Such agitations produce great activity in the soul of man, and impel it to the extremes, both of evil and good. But, we must add, Confucius did not share during his life that profound veneration with which posterity have regarded him. He belonged originally, not to the central empire, but to Lou, a tributary state; and though raised at one time to the dignity of

prime minister in his native territory, was obliged, by the misconduct of the prince, to seek for employment elsewhere. Our narrative will indeed make it appear that he was repeatedly exposed to neglect and harsh treatment, sometimes even to the greatest personal hazards.

The founder of the dynasty of Tsin, though he had seated himself on the imperial throne, had still to encounter a formidable resistance. He left, moreover, to his successor Chi-hoang-ti the task of subduing a powerful confederacy of the independent princes, which occupied him during the greater part of his reign. Of the embittered enmity with which these contests were waged, the following may serve as a specimen :—

Tan, prince of Yen, seeing himself in imminent danger of falling a sacrifice to the ambition of Chi-hoang-ti, resolved to employ a desperate method of averting his fate. He invited from a neighbouring state King-kou, whom he knew to be a sworn enemy of the emperor, and represented, that the only mode of gratifying his just resentment and saving his country was by going in person and stabbing the tyrant to the heart. Impelled by the hope of glory and revenge, he consented to the horrible deed, but represented the extreme difficulty of finding access to the royal presence. Only one expedient occurred to him. Fan-yu-ki, an imperial general, having incurred his master's displeasure, had been stripped of all he possessed, and a high price was set on his life. He had thereupon fled to Yen, where he was received with open arms. King-kou now requested the prince to cut off his head, and deposit it in his hands, as a sure passport to Chi-hoang-ti's pre-

sence. Tan rejected this proposal as dishonourable to one who had sought his protection, and to whom it had been pledged. But the other was not discouraged. He went to Fan-yu-ki himself, and, after explaining his design, represented that he and his family were already ruined beyond remedy ; that no hope but of revenge was left to him ; and that this could only be gratified by the exploit now in contemplation. He therefore earnestly besought him to surrender his head, in order that it might be employed in this important mission. The latter, after revolving in his mind these dark motives, consented, seized a sabre, and, by applying it to his neck, this bloody instrument of his purpose was soon placed in the possession of King-kou. Thus furnished, the assassin, concealing on his person a poniard dipt in poison, hastened to the capital, and found no difficulty in being ushered into the palace. As Chi-hoang-ti contemplated the gory head with ferocious joy, his visiter drew the poniard and was about to strike ; but the emperor, noting his purpose with watchful eye, hastily sprung away. King-kou pursued ; but the fugitive, aiming a back blow, struck him with a sabre on the leg. He fell, and was put to death amid the most dreadful tortures.

Chi-hoang-ti at length completed the subjection of all the independent princes. Those proud dynasties, which had so long defied and even rivalled the supreme power, were extinguished in blood, and the victor with relentless rigour sought to extirpate every remnant of their name and race. On this account he may be considered in some degree as the founder of the Chinese empire as it at present exists ; for, even before the late anarchy, most of the early

monarchs reigned only over some of the central districts. He made great efforts to establish throughout the whole country the supreme sway of one sovereign, instead of that divided rule of vassal-princes by which it had been hitherto governed. A new division was made into thirty-six provinces, in the room of the less numerous states; and instead of members of the royal family, or individuals of high birth, who had hitherto acted as governors, persons were chosen entirely subservient to the prince. He compelled the people every where to deliver up the arms in their possession, and obliged all individuals possessed of influence, being not fewer than 120,000 in number, to reside in the capital. He erected palaces of the most surpassing splendour, in which 800,000 men are said to have been employed.* His absolute power was maintained with extreme jealousy, and even fury. A stone had been found in a particular district, which the superstition of the neighbourhood represented as having fallen from heaven, and on which was written, "Chi-hoang-ti will soon die, and his states will then be divided." As the author of this writing could not be discovered, the emperor, that he might not escape, barbarously commanded all the inhabitants of the district to be put to death. He repelled with vigour the assaults of the Huns, who were becoming more and more formidable, and he erected, or at least, by his general, Mong-tien, enlarged and completed that stupendous work, the Great Wall, by which its northern frontier is defended against the irruptions of the Tartars. But his memory is clouded with an odious celebrity, occasioned by his extraordinary

* Gaubil, p. 61-65.

efforts to extirpate knowledge, and to obliterate all that had been done to render China a learned country. This conduct is generally understood to have proceeded from the insane vanity of representing himself as the founder of the empire. But the despot, in fact, had obvious motives of policy, which his ministers also urged upon him, for wishing to throw a veil over the events of the preceding five centuries. To one who sought to rule with absolute sway, the authority long exercised by the multitude of independent princes, called up recollections which he was naturally anxious to suppress. The singular honour, also, in which philosophers and historians had been held, their free access to the interior of courts, and the boldness with which they had been accustomed to comment on public affairs, rendered them odious in his eyes. Impelled by these feelings, he gave a full loose to his jealous rage. Four hundred and sixty men of letters, the most illustrious in his dominions, were condemned to the dreadful punishment of being buried alive. The fatal mandate had previously been issued, that the Shoo-king, and all the other venerated works on the Chinese nation, should be delivered up, for the purpose of being committed to the flames; and this decree was enforced with the most excessive rigour.

It is remarkable, that this stern and haughty spirit was tormented by a slavish dread of death, and became a dupe to the delusive hope of enjoying immortality even in this life. In pursuance of this object, an impostor persuaded him to send a number of young men and women to a certain island, where they would find an herb possessed of a quality fitted to gratify his utmost wishes. The issue

proved disastrous ; the vessel was wrecked, and all on board perished. The emperor, however, would never allow his demise to be alluded to, and at length expired without naming a successor.

These labours and crimes, by which Chi-hoang-ti had sought to found a permanent throne, were wholly abortive ; none ever had a shorter duration. His son, Hou-hai, who assumed the name of Chi-hoang-ti II., a weak prince, and entirely governed by an imperious favourite, was very unfit to maintain dominion over so distracted an empire. Under him most of the small kingdoms which his father had subdued, and of which he had sought to obliterate even the recollection, sprung up anew, and China was again split into petty states. Amid this confusion, Lieou-pang, the chief of an obscure village, by his personal talents and address, succeeded in vanquishing all opponents, and finally extinguishing the dynasty of Tsin, after it had lasted only forty-three years. Under the name of Kao-hoang-ti he founded the family of Han, considered one of the most illustrious that ever occupied the Chinese throne.

CHAPTER III.

Modern History of China.

Why Modern History commences with the Han Dynasty—Reign of Han-ou-ti—The Huns—Their Mode of Warfare—Their Power broken—Literary Associations—Insurrection of Yellow Caps—Disturbed State of the Empire—Dynasty of Tcin—Tartar Kingdom of Han—Its great Splendour—Humiliation of the Emperors—Rise of Lieou-yu—Short and disturbed Dynasties—Foundation of the Dynasty of Soui—Origin of Chinese Gardening—Dynasty of Tang—Great Qualities of Tai-tsong—Tyranny of the Empress Ou-heou—Prevalence of the Superstitions of Tao-tse and Fo—Several short Dynasties succeeded by that of Song—Encouragement of Learning—Tchu-hi—Rise of the Tartar People called Kin—They overrun great Part of China—The Mongols—Early Adventures of Zingis—His Invasion of China—Adopts its Civilisation—Downfal of the Kingdom of the Kin—Attack on the Song Dynasty—Its Subversion, and entire Subjection of China by the Descendants of Zingis—Their Mode of governing—Insurrections—The Tartars driven out, and the native Dynasty of Ming established—Its Vicissitudes—Violent Insurrections—The Mantchoos called in—They conquer the whole Empire—Mode of governing—Reign of Kang-hi—Of Yong-tching—Persecutions of Christianity—Reign of Kien-long—His Conquests in Tartary and Thibet—Troubles during his Reign—Kea-king—Dangerous internal Disturbances—Piracy—Taou-kwang—Insurrections in Tartary—In the Southern Provinces—In Formosa—All these for the Present suppressed.

THE accession of the prince just named, though it took place about two centuries before the Christian era, appears to mark the limit between the annals of ancient and modern China. Henceforward they were preserved in a more regular and connected series ; and all the great men whose names are venerated for their antiquity existed prior to this epoch.

The founder of the Han dynasty proved an able and beneficent ruler. Though himself illiterate, he felt the importance of knowledge, invited learned men to his court, and in a great measure reversed the sentence against philosophy and historical composition which had been pronounced under the former government.

The regular succession was interrupted by a short usurpation on the part of Liu-heou, a queen-mother. It was restored in Hiao-ouen-ti, a mild and intelligent sovereign, who, though he did not raise literature to its former influence, favoured and encouraged it. To this period is referred the invention of paper made of mashed bamboo, and used instead of leaves or the rind of trees; also that of Chinese ink, which, for drawing, is still preferable to any manufactured in Europe.

After the short reign of Hiao-king-ti, the throne was filled by Han-ou-ti, a very able and enlightened monarch, under whom learning was honoured, and its professors elevated to the highest ranks. A general invitation was given to the literary exiles, who, amounting to several thousands, hastened to court, and of whom the most meritorious were raised to posts of distinction. Not only was all proscription against historical studies removed, but the arrangements formerly mentioned for recovering the Shoo-king and other ancient records were resumed with the utmost zeal. Han-ou-ti also subdued several provinces in the north as well as in the south, which hitherto had acknowledged no regular subjection. Yet he was long misled by the delusions of the Tao-tse, who boasted of being able to render him immortal. They drew from him immense sums

for their ceremonies and the ingredients of their enchanted draughts. When at length they professed to be on the point of securing to him this envied boon, their chief himself died, and every one expected that the emperor's eyes would now be opened ; but they persuaded him that the great philosopher, so far from being dead, had merely assumed a different shape. Once, when the cup of immortality, prepared at an immense cost, was carrying to the prince, one of the courtiers snatched it from the bearer and quaffed it off. The enraged monarch ordered him immediately to be put to death ; but the nobleman, whose only object was to undeceive his master, retorted,—“ How can you put me to death, when I have just rendered myself immortal? If I die, your system falls to the ground.” The imperial dupe, though not yet convinced, hesitated to put his creed to so hard a test, and pardoned the offender. It must be stated to his honour, that at an advanced period of life he became sensible of his delusion, and made a public and candid avowal of its absurdity.

At this era, the north-western frontier was exposed to dreadful ravages from the Tartars, whose earliest name of Hien-yun was changed during the dynasty of Techeou into Hiong-nou, and by Europeans into Huns,* under which appellation they afterwards acted a conspicuous part in the overthrow of the Roman empire. China, in consequence of her civil dissensions, was then a warlike nation, and the barbarians were unable to make any permanent impression on her. The different military systems of the two nations are thus described in a speech of Hiao-ouen-ti's prime minister :—

* De Guignes, *Histoire des Huns*, &c. vol. i. part ii. p. 13.

“ To mount and descend the steepest mountains with astonishing rapidity,—to swim across torrents and the deepest rivers,—to endure wind, rain, hunger, thirst,—to make forced marches,—not to be stopped by precipices,—to accustom the horses to go through the most narrow passes,—to handle with skill the bow and arrow ;—these are the points in which the Tartars excel. They attack, fly, and rally, with admirable promptitude and facility. In gorges and defiles, they will always have the advantage over us ; but on the plain, where the evolutions of our chariots are easily performed, our cavalry will always beat theirs. Their bows have not the strength of ours ; their lances are shorter ; their cuirasses and other defensive arms of inferior temper ; in the shock of battle they cannot withstand the impetuosity of our troops. To fight on foot with spear and pike,—to form a regular front,—to cut a way through the enemy when surrounded ;—these are the manœuvres proper to our troops, which the Tartars are ignorant of, and are unable to resist.” But although, for these reasons, the Hiong-nou were unable to make any permanent conquest, it was impossible to prevent large tracts from being laid waste by their incursions ; and a practice was introduced of soothing their pride by granting a Chinese princess in marriage to their chief. The nation, however, lamented the fate of the royal daughters who, sacrificed to political motives, were compelled to quit all the splendour and gayety of polished life, and to become inmates of the rude tent of a warlike shepherd. Han-ou-ti, on receiving the first application of this nature, was advised by one counsellor rather to drive this barbarous foe to the

extremity of the earth than to welcome him as a son-in-law. But an experienced sage remarked that "The Hiong-nou are like flocks of birds, rising now here now there; when you seem about to catch them they fly off as on wings and disappear. Without fixed dwellings, in moveable tents, changing their post every instant, sure to fall suddenly upon us and take us by surprise, they might be pursued a thousand *ly*, and beaten a thousand times, without any thing but loss to ourselves."

It is recorded as a singular resolution, that Han-ou-ti, after having fixed on one of his sons as his successor on the throne, immediately put the youth's mother to death. His courtiers having asked with surprise the reason of this proceeding, he replied, that it appeared to him the only means of preventing such calamities as had arisen to the empire from the ambition and violence of empress-mothers. Their misdeeds appear, no doubt, somewhat prominent in Chinese history; yet the remedy now employed was certainly of a very strange and questionable description.

The family of Han enjoyed the sceptre from 206, B. C., to 220, A. D., or 426 years. The princes after Han-ou-ti were,—

Han-tchao-ti,.....	B. C. 86-74	Han-ming-ti,.....	A. D. 75
Lieou-ho,.....	to 73	Han-tchang-ti,.....	89
Han-siuen-ti,.....	48	Han-ho-ti,.....	106
Han-yuen-ti,.....	32	Han-chang-ti,.....	107
Han-tching-ti,.....	7	Han-ngan-ti,.....	126
Han-ngai-ti,.....	A. D. 1	Han-chun-ti,.....	145
Han-ping-ti,.....	6	Han-tchong-ti,.....	146
Tu-tse-yng,.....	9	Han-tche-ti,.....	147
Quang-mang,.....	23	Han-houon-ti,.....	168
Lieou-hiuen,.....	25	Han-ling-ti,.....	190
Kouang-ou-ti,.....	58	Han-hien-ti,.....	220

This dynasty passed, on the whole, in a uniform

tenor, without any vicissitudes, except those to which every great nation is subject. The Hiongnou, who continued their inroads, were commonly vanquished in pitched battles, though they sometimes cut off small detachments which had rashly penetrated into their territory. About 90, A. D., however, they underwent a signal revolution ; being split by rebellion into two portions, called the Northern and Southern Huns. The latter, who were the weakest, sought the aid of the empire by owning themselves its vassals.* They combined also with the Sien-pi, another Tartar clan, who likewise made war against their rivals ; and, thus aided, they succeeded in completely driving them out of their confines.† The vanquished Huns founded a new sovereignty on the borders of Siberia,‡ and proceeding continually westward, at length penetrated into Europe, where, under the command of Attila, during the fifth century, they ranked among the most formidable of those tribes who subverted the dominion of Rome. So long as this contest raged, the Chinese, courted by the contending powers in their neighbourhood, enjoyed tranquillity.

Literature was generally cultivated during this period, though rather by reviving the doctrines of Confucius than by any original form of thought. Under Han-tchang-ti, the researches into ancient history were brought nearly to a completion. The descendants of the sage just named were ennobled ; and his works and maxims became the standard by which the Chinese mind was regulated. Under Han-houon-ti and Han-ling-ti, two of the last of

* De Guignes, *Histoire des Huns*, &c. vol. i. part ii. pp. 113, 114.

† Ibid. pp. 122, 123.

‡ Ibid. pp. 277, 278.

this dynasty, an academy was formed by some chiefs, entirely independent of the court, for the instruction of the people, who ran in crowds to listen, and conceived the highest esteem for their teachers. But the monarch, and the eunuchs his servile courtiers, chose to regard this association as an encroachment upon his prerogative, and tending to foster a spirit of discontent. The patriotic noblemen were accordingly arrested, deprived of their employments, and liberated only upon condition of removing to a distance from the capital. The acclamations of the people, however, rendered their departure a kind of triumphal procession.

The two last emperors, Han-ling-ti and Han-hien-ti, displayed the weaknesses incident to an old family, governed by favourites, and now become indolent and voluptuous. One of the most remarkable occurrences was the insurrection of the *Yellow Caps*. This disturbance was raised by an individual named Tchang-kio, who persuaded the multitude that, by the use of a certain water, and magical words pronounced over it, he could cure them of a pestilential disease which was then prevalent. He thereby acquired immense popularity; and, unlike European quacks, instead of merely seeking to amass a fortune he assembled 500,000 men, made them assume a yellow cap, and openly aspired at the supreme power. Probably there must have been some deeper cause prompting to so great a movement. His followers, at all events, gained several advantages, till the whole regular force of the empire was brought against them, when, being a mere disorderly crowd, they were routed with immense slaughter. They reappeared, however, some years after, and commit-

ted extensive ravages. Under the weak rule of Han-hien-ti, rebel chiefs began to rise in every quarter; one of whom detained him some time a prisoner; while on another occasion, the royal army being totally defeated, he was obliged to flee with a handful of followers. Tsao-tsao, however, an able minister and general, completely retrieved his affairs; but, as it was through him alone that his master sat on the throne, he soon became the actual ruler of China. Every place was filled with his creatures, by whom he was solicited to assume the imperial rank, and found a new dynasty. This he declined; intimating, however, an expectation that his posterity might reach that eminence. He died before the emperor, when his son Tsao-pi, finding the grandees equally attached to him, determined to seize the crown. To preserve appearances, however, he thought proper not to accept it until he had been three times asked by the reigning monarch, who was compelled to perform this ungracious duty, professing a desire to relieve himself of the cares of government. After this farce, which was followed by a public delivery of the national seal, Han-hien-ti was created Prince of Chan-yang, and sent away, with diminished splendour, to exercise a subordinate rule.

Tsao-pi, A. D. 220, assumed the imperial sceptre, to which was now attached an unquestioned supremacy over the greater part of the empire. But there remained still a small kingdom, composed of the north-western provinces of Shen-see and Se-tchuen, governed by Lieou-pey, a prince of the race of Han. As soon as this chief learned the dethronement of Han-hien-ti, he first put on mourning for him as dead, then, considering himself as next heir, assum-

ed the vacant office, under the title of Tchao-lie-ti ; and, notwithstanding his comparatively small domain, Chinese history, attaching itself as much as possible to hereditary succession, has always classed him as the legitimate sovereign, giving to his family the appellation of the latter Han.

There was a third kingdom, Ou, which monosyllable designated not the largest, but the finest part of China, along the southern bank of the great river Yang-tse-kiang ; having for its capital, first, Ouchang-fou, and then Nan-king.

The empire, during the short dynasty of Heou-han, as it was called, was disturbed by the ambition of these states, each striving to attain the supremacy. At the end of forty-three years, this race was overthrown, not however by Tsao-pi or his descendants, but by two of their generals, Sse-ma-tchao and Ssyema-yen. These leaders procured the death of two princes who opposed their intentions ; then they overcame and extinguished the Han family ; and, in the end, the latter compelled his master to abdicate, and ascended the throne under the title of Tcin-ou-ti.

His reign began with great splendour, and he proved a very able sovereign. After having restored order in the administration, he formed the design of subjecting Ou, and thereby uniting all the provinces into one. He raised an army of 200,000 men, which he divided into five corps, and threw a bridge over the Yellow River,—a thing hitherto judged impossible. After many difficulties in passing the Yang-tse-kiang, and an obstinate resistance by the enemy, he triumphantly accomplished his object ; but he had no sooner attained this success, than he was accused of yielding to sloth and luxury.

Under Tcin-hoei-ti, the next sovereign, China relapsed into those disorders by which she had been so long distracted. Divisions in the royal family, and revolts in distant parts of the empire, kept up a constant agitation. But the most formidable enemy to the dynasty of Tcin was a chief named Lieou-yuen, of Hunnish origin, who obtained from the imperial court the rank of commandant-general of the five Hiong-nou hordes who owned themselves its vassals. This ambitious leader, possessing the entire confidence of his countrymen, soon induced them to rally round his standard ; for, being descended by the female line from the last royal family, he announced himself as its representative, and assumed the title of King of Han. Establishing his seat of government in the north-western province, he constantly extended his power during the reign of this emperor, and still more of his son Tcin-hoai-ti, a mild and intelligent prince, under whom, in less troublous times, the state might have prospered. At length, Lieou-tsong, his successor, by a rapid march upon Lo-yang, where the court then resided, surprised the monarch, who, attempting to escape with a small escort, was pursued and taken. At first he treated his imperial captive with a certain degree of generosity ; but afterwards, irritated by some disasters, he obliged him, at a great festival, to wait at table,—a spectacle which so affected several Chinese officers, that they burst into tears. The Tartar prince was at first moved by their distress ; although, in the course of a few days, upon a very hasty accusation, he ordered both them and their sovereign to be put to death. He did not, however, yet attempt to seize the government ; but,

continuing to extend his power, he succeeded so well as to get into his hands Tcin-min-ti, the next heir to the throne. Him he treated from the first with the utmost indignity, compelling him to perform the most humiliating acts of obeisance. He obliged him to attend as a page when hunting, to wait at table, and even to carry his parasol. At the sight of this degradation, several of the nobles were very much affected ; and Sin-pin, formerly president of one of the tribunals, threw himself on his master's neck in an agony of grief. The tyrant, unmoved by pity, doomed him to lose his life ; and learning soon after that the Chinese chiefs, indignant at his conduct towards their emperor, were conspiring to deliver him, made that prince himself share the same fate. Under the reigns of Tcin-yuen-ti, Tcin-ming-ti, and Tcin-ching-ti, this semi-Tartar dynasty continued to make progress ; though it was occasionally rent by internal dissensions. The name was then altered from Han to Tchao ; and the throne was usurped by Che-le, a powerful nobleman, who transmitted it to his son Che-kong, whom Che-hou, his relative, deposed. This ruler displayed in his capital of Ye a degree of splendour such as China had never before witnessed. The walls of the palace were composed of beautiful stones of various colours ; the tiles were richly varnished ; gold and silver glittered in every part of the mansion ; the doors and partitions of the chambers were ornamented with pearls and precious stones. At his court were maintained upwards of 10,000 persons possessed of various qualifications, particularly in drawing the bow, in astrology, and fortune-telling ; for learning is not mentioned as a recommendation in the eyes of this

barbarous ruler. But the most remarkable pageant in which he chose to indulge was, a cavalry regiment composed of the tallest and handsomest girls within his dominions. Attired in rich embroidered robes, they attended him constantly as body-guards, and enlivened his festivals by performing on various instruments. This extravagant luxury, accompanied by an increasing dissatisfaction, gradually rendered the dynasty of Tchao less formidable ; other chiefs and tributary princes dared to become its rivals ; the pirate Sun-nghen swept the maritime provinces, carrying off an immense number of captives ; and China, in short, exhibited a complete chaos of conflicting pretensions. These evils were aggravated by an absurd indulgence in the delusive hope of perpetual life on earth, encouraged by the visionary sect of the Tao-tse. Tcin-ngai-ti, whose talents otherwise promised to retrieve public affairs, was so bewitched by these impostors, that he would taste nothing except the draughts of immortality which they presented. By this regimen, instead of gaining an endless life, he first became incapable of all business, and then dropped into an untimely grave. Tcin-hiao-ou-ti, one of his successors, who supported with some vigour the sinking throne, met a strange and tragical fate. As he was one day conversing with a favourite wife, being warm with wine, he began rallying her upon her age ; alleging, that being on the borders of thirty she must now think of giving place to a younger beauty. Her pride was stung ; and she determined on deadly revenge. She continued the conversation in a lively strain till he fell asleep, when with the aid of her women she stifled him in his own clothes.

He was succeeded by Tcin-ngan-ti, the fourteenth member of this distracted dynasty, who was compelled by Hoan-hiuen, a powerful governor, to resign his crown, and retire to private life. Several great lords, however, still cherishing veneration for the house of Tcin, determined to make a combined effort to reinstate him. But the aid of some chief of the most distinguished valour seemed indispensable to the accomplishment of this formidable undertaking; and they pitched upon Lieou-yu, one of the most remarkable characters in Chinese history. He was born in a station so humble, that, his mother having died while he was still an infant, the father, considering it impossible to rear him, was about to relinquish the task, when a female neighbour undertook it. In his boyhood, he was obliged to earn his subsistence by selling shoes,—an occupation which he performed so carelessly, that he was regarded as one from whom no good could be expected. A military officer of distinction, however, whose standard he joined, found him so intelligent, especially on all subjects connected with war, that he gave him a small command; and he soon distinguished himself by exploits that would have done honour to the greatest captains. In the eyes of the confederate lords, who were in search of a man fitted to restore the fallen race of Tcin, he appeared superior to every other. Nor did he fail to realize their most sanguine expectations; for in a very few years he vanquished the usurper, drove him into exile, and replaced Tcin-ngan-ti in the possession of power. But he who had restored the crown became its real master, and all the great concerns of state were really administered by him.

For thirteen years, it is true, he allowed Tcin-ngan-ti to glitter as an imperial pageant ; but, finding him not sufficiently submissive under this thralldom, he employed his creatures to take away his life, and raised to the throne one of his brothers, under the title of Tcin-kong-ti. He soon, however, tired of allowing even this shadow of royalty to remain, and therefore compelled the new sovereign to make a public abdication in his favour. Thus terminated the family of Tcin, after an agitated rule of 155 years.

The country was now governed during two centuries by a succession of short dynasties, which the historians call Ou-tai, and each of which was brought to an end by the usurpation of a minister, a general, or a tributary prince. These royal houses were called Song, which lasted fifty-nine years ; Tsi, twenty-three years ; Leang, fifty-five years ; Tchin, thirty-two ; Soui, twenty-nine. During the four first, the Chinese dominions were split into southern and northern ; the former of which, contrary to preceding ideas, was considered as the empire, while the latter was divided among several potentates, of whom the Prince of Ouei was by far the most important. Towards the close of the Tchin rule, Yang-kien, chief of Soui, having become prime minister in the northern kingdom, soon acquired the entire sway, put to death his master, and assumed the imperial title. He afterwards marched into the southern portion of his dominions, then held by Heou-tcheou, representative of the dynasty of Tchin, a weak and voluptuous ruler. Yang-kien speedily vanquished his armies, and marched to the capital ; but the monarch and his family could nowhere be found. At length a party of soldiers, in passing a deep well,

carelessly threw in some stones, when a cry was heard from below. Hereupon, they let down a rope with a bucket fastened to the end of it, and to their great surprise drew up two princesses ; and they learned with wonder, that the whole imperial family were in the well. Accordingly, the emperor, the empress, and their son, fifteen years old, were extricated from their place of concealment by the same means. Heou-tcheou, who was treated with much generosity, was allowed to retire into a private station. Yang-kien having at a later period subdued several refractory governors, became master of the whole of China, which, after the interval of three centuries, was thus again united.

The conqueror, who, assuming the title of Ouen-ti, founded the imperial house of Soui, was an active but ignorant barbarian. He ruled with a severity which was perhaps necessary to repress the license that had grown up during the troublous times just passed by ; causing the offending mandarins to be caned in his presence so violently that they often expired under the blows. He used to employ agents, who tendered to men in office liberal presents in money and silk, and if they accepted the smallest article they were immediately put to death. The utmost simplicity and economy pervaded his household. His table never exhibited more than one dish ; his mansion, furniture, and dress, were plain in the extreme ; and he had his clothes often mended. Unfortunately, one of his retrenchments applied to the means of acquiring knowledge, which he neither understood nor valued. He suppressed the colleges, which, since the dynasty of Han, had been supported in all the great cities, leaving

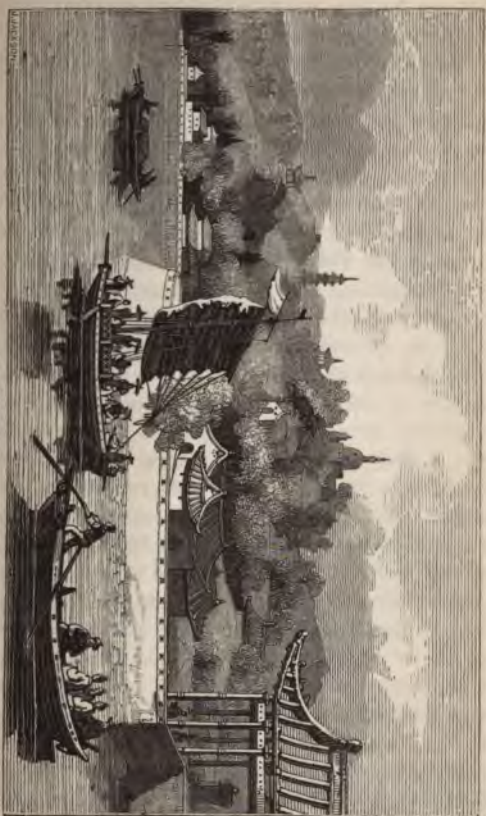
only that in the capital on a reduced scale. At the same time, he knew how to be generous, and even profuse, in rewarding important services; while his severe economy enabled him to relieve the burdens of his people, yet keep his treasury always full.

Yang-ti, his son, succeeding to the throne by inheritance, cherished dispositions quite opposite to those by which the father had raised himself. The finances of the empire were lavished, partly in rearing spacious palaces, but partly, also, on other objects of utility and elegance, which have since become characteristic of China. He commenced and carried to a great extent its system of interior navigation. A million of men were employed in constructing canals, by which the principal rivers were connected; but their labour is said to have been enforced with such severity that many of them actually perished. Superb barges, fitted with numerous apartments, conveyed the imperial family from one to another of their capitals. No cost was spared in the number and splendour of the imperial residences; though a more refined taste was shown in the collection of a menagerie, composed of the rarest birds and most remarkable animals; and also in laying out extensive gardens upon that plan which continues to prevail in the country,—not formed into regular compartments, but where art was employed in moulding nature into the boldest and most picturesque forms. A lake was constructed many miles in circuit, and surrounded by hills of varied appearance, crowned with the finest trees and shrubs; while an artificial eminence, raised to a great height, commanded a view over this enchanting scene. This style of gardening, it will be

readily acknowledged, manifests a more refined taste than that which till very lately obtained in Europe.* The emperor also invited learned men of every class from all parts of his dominions, and encouraged them to compose works in their respective departments; the number produced being, it is asserted, not fewer than 17,000.

Yang-ti, notwithstanding the severe judgments of Chinese historians, seems really to have been an accomplished prince, and stud to adorn a period of peace and prosperity: that he could not directly rule a country still grossly agitated with turbulent elements: All the principles of discord sown; the once independent Kingdoms again reared their heads: and a tumultuous rebellion or civil dissension. One emperor alone published a most violent manifesto against him, declaring that the bamboo in the kingdom would not burn, iron strong enough to reach his numerous subjects, nor even the waters of the ocean be sufficient to wash them out. Amid these troubles, Hsueh, an officer of imperial service, conceived the design of raising himself to the head of affairs, being aided by the treasury of his son Li-chi-min, and of the daughter Li-eh, who, selling all her jewels, levied a body of troops, which was named the Band of the Hsueh. He completely succeeded; and the year, it is said, was the first to suggest, that he who had ruled the empire ought to reign over it. Li-yuen deposed Yang-ti, and at first placed in his stead Keng-ti, his son, in whose name he administered the government. But this timid prince, seeing the

* The enamel plate exhibits a view of the gardens of Yuen-min, at the time of Lord Macartney's embassy.

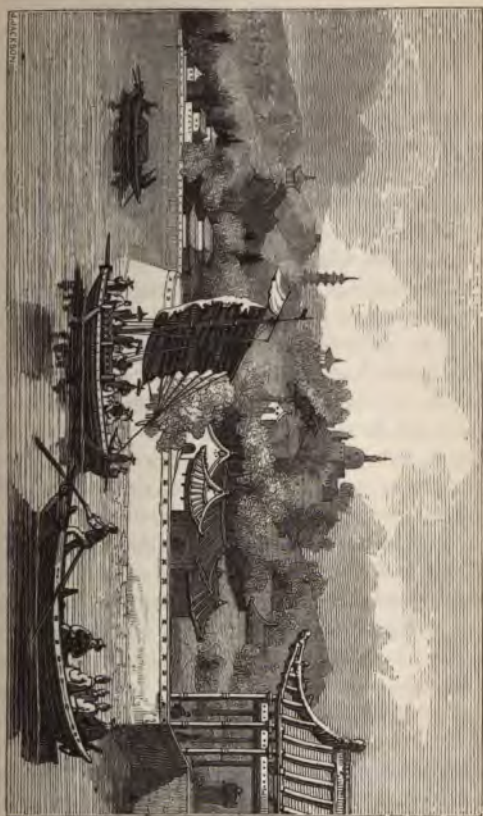


Imperial Gardens.

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Yang-ti, notwithstanding the severe judgment of Chinese historians, seems really to have been an accomplished prince, and fitted to adorn a period of peace and prosperity. But he could not efficiently rule a country still greatly agitated with turbulent elements. All the principles of discord revived; the once independent kingdoms again reared their heads; and six insurrections followed in rapid succession. One insurgent chief published a most violent manifesto against him, declaring, that all the bamboos in the kingdom would not furnish paper enough to record his numerous misdeeds, nor would the waters of the ocean be sufficient to wash them out. Amid these troubles, Li-yuen, an officer in the imperial service, conceived the design of raising himself to the head of affairs, being aided by the bravery of his son Li-chi-min, and of his daughter Li-chi, who, selling all her jewels, levied a body of troops, which was named the Band of the Heroine. He completely succeeded; and the youth, it is said, was the first to suggest, that he who had saved the empire ought to reign over it. Li-yuen deposed Yang-ti, and at first placed in his stead Kong-ti, his son, in whose name he administered the government. But this timid prince, seeing the

* The annexed plate exhibits a view of the gardens of Yuen-mien, at the time of Lord Macartney's embassy.



Imperial Gardens.

country torn by contending factions, soon resigned his crown in favour of the usurper, who founded in 619 the royal house of Tang.

This dynasty was one of the longest in Chinese history, since it endured 275 years,—from 622 to 897 ; and in no period, perhaps, was the empire more prosperous and happy. It was not, indeed, exempted from internal trouble ; but, on the whole, it was firmly united, ruled by native princes, and even received homage from many of the surrounding states.

Li-yuen, who assumed the name of Kao-tsou, had an active reign, which was nearly brought to a close before the many rival pretensions were crushed. His most formidable enemies, the Tartars, had intrenched themselves on the frontier in so strong a position, that it was impossible to dislodge them, till the imperial general fell upon a singular stratagem. On a hill, in full view of the hostile army, he placed a band of musicians, with a multitude of persons dancing in the most extravagant attitudes. While the attention of their undisciplined host was wholly attracted by this spectacle, they were attacked in the rear by the Band of the Heroine, thrown into confusion, and completely routed.

Having, in the course of a short reign of seven years, reduced all China to obedience, he left the empire to his son Li-chi-min, whom, under his assumed appellation of Tai-tsong, the Chinese venerate as one of their most illustrious princes. When known by his original name, he signalized himself by many displays of valour, and had proved, as we have seen, one of the chief instruments in establishing his father's dominion ; and, when placed on the imperial seat, he appeared, it is said, as a second Solomon,—

a sage on the throne. He raised letters to the highest honour, and, erecting a college, is reported to have enriched it with a library of 200,000 volumes. Accommodations were provided in it for the learned men, whose lessons were attended by scholars to the amount of many thousands; the emperor himself holding long conferences with the professors, and taking their advice on the most important occasions. He caused them to draw up a new code, in which the statutes were all arranged under a few distinct and intelligible heads, and the penalties considerably mitigated. Ninety-two of these inflicting capital punishment, and seventy-one awarding banishment, were expunged. The calendar was also reformed with care, and purified not only from astronomical errors, but from various astrological reveries with which it had been corrupted. It no longer included horoscopes, predicting a man's fortune by the star under which he was born, or the mode of becoming rich by the happy choice of a place of sepulture for his parents. This sovereign also emancipated himself from various puerile superstitions which had been imposed on his predecessors. A white pye having built its nest in his bed-room, a number of courtiers ran to congratulate him on this happy omen; but he derided their exultation, declaring, that the advice of wise counsellors was the only augury of a successful administration to which he would ever look. Many of his sayings and maxims were recorded by his subjects with a veneration of which, indeed, they seem not unworthy. Speaking of public extortion, he said,—“The people make the kingdom. For the sovereign to ruin them, in order to enrich himself, is as if a man should feed on his

own flesh. He would satisfy his hunger, but the body would perish." Some advised him to try the public virtue of his servants, by ordering them to do something that was manifestly injurious to the state; but he judiciously replied,—“ This plan would doubtless be effectual; but if a sovereign uses deceit with his great men, can he exact uprightness from them? The fountain must be pure, that the stream may be pure also. I would rather be ignorant of the evil that exists, than discover it by oblique and unworthy means.”

During his government, not only were the Tartars held in check, but a considerable portion of their territory was reduced to subjection. Historians even boast, that envoys were received from countries to which the emperor's arms could not reach, voluntarily seeking to be placed under his rule; and that his dominion was thus extended over regions in which grass would scarcely grow. Probably, the Chinese, according to their vainglorious notions, have represented ambassadors who came with mere compliments as the bearers of homage. It is certain, however, that, during the twenty-three years of this reign, the empire was more tranquil and prosperous at home, and more powerful and respected abroad, than at any former period.

Kao-tsong, the next sovereign, was not destitute of good qualities; though one fatal error involved his family and affairs in the deepest calamity. Ou-chi, called afterwards Ou-heou, a young lady of singular beauty and talents, had been received into the palace of Tai-tsong as one of his wives; but, after his death, according to custom, she was immured in a convent. The young king, however, having

caught an accidental glance of her person, conceived a passion for her, which the practice of polygamy renders less revolting to oriental ideas than to ours. With the consent of his consort, he took her into his palace, and from that time Ou-heou meditated the design of raising herself to the supreme power. Having prepared her mind for every crime by which she could accomplish her desires, her first aim was to supplant the empress. Historians do not hesitate to charge her with putting to death her own infant, in such circumstances as to make suspicion of the guilt fall upon the royal spouse. Kao-tsong, now disregarding the prudent advice of his wisest ministers, raised his favourite to the summit of her ambition. She was not yet satisfied, but confined her degraded rival and Siao-chi, the first among those who held the title of queen, in a remote apartment. Learning that the emperor had held an interview with them, and shown signs of returning kindness, she caused their feet and hands to be cut off; adding other cruelties, which deprived them of life in a few days; while he was so infatuated, that he took no step to punish these frightful enormities. She now governed him almost entirely in all important measures; and, at a later period, when his vigour of mind had decayed, she took upon her to administer public affairs without even pretending to consult him. A eunuch and a Tao-tse magician were her constant advisers. His majesty was at length disgusted, and, with the concurrence of his principal ministers, determined to deprive her of all power. But she had no sooner become acquainted with this resolution, than she assailed him at once so fiercely and artfully, that the weak prince had not the courage to persevere, but allowed

his counsellors to be thrown into prison and put to death. Thenceforth her sway was uncontrolled, while her influence at court was such, that, on the death of Kao-tsong, she set aside the legitimate heir. She not only directed the course of business, but performed in person many high duties, appropriate only to the supreme ruler; while, by changing the name of the dynasty to Tcheou, she showed evidently her intention of terminating that of Tang, and placing her own family on the throne. The reverence, however, still cherished for the race of Tai-tsong, rendered this scheme extremely unpopular. Extensive conspiracies were formed, which, however, by her vigilance, she at once discovered and frustrated. She laboured to quench the spirit of resistance in torrents of blood. Particular encouragement was given to private informations; and as many sought to gratify by such means their own resentments, some of the most faithful servants of the state fell victims to her policy. At length Fou-yu-y, a favourite, and a minister of undoubted fidelity, was seized with such a panic, that he went deranged, and committed suicide, in order, as he avowed, to escape the disgraceful death which now appeared inevitable. This tragical event opened the eyes of Ou-heou to the falsehood of the charges upon which she had shed so much blood; but her repentance seemed only to impel her into a new career of cruelty. She denounced the severest punishment on those whose secret intelligence had proved not strictly conformable to truth; and on this ground, in one day, she executed 850 persons. Notwithstanding the accumulated odium thus contracted, the vigour of her character, the excellent arrange-

ments made by Tai-tsong in every branch of the administration, and the habits of submission to which the people were accustomed, enabled her to rule thirteen years with little opposition. The empire, meantime, was partially distracted by wars with the Tartars, which, however, generally terminated in their defeat. But as she grew old and somewhat infirm, the tide of public discontent became still stronger, and manifested itself most decidedly against her project of raising her own family to the throne. She found it necessary to bring forward Tchong-tsong, the rightful heir, and declare him her successor. She even placed an army at his command ; but the troops flocked round their legitimate prince so ardently, and in such numbers, that she became alarmed and retracted this step. At length, being seized with a dangerous illness, she was abandoned by almost every adherent, and felt herself obliged to allow him to assume the imperial dignity. Some historians consider her administration an interruption of the Tang dynasty, while others regard Tchong-tsong as the real sovereign during the whole of this period.

The family now began to sink under that decrepitude to which hereditary succession in despotic states almost inevitably leads ; and among its most serious evils was the multiplication and exorbitant power of the eunuchs. These persons, first introduced into the seraglio in the most humble capacity, as the jealous but degraded guardians of its inmates, insinuated themselves into the favour of weak princes, and gradually became able to defy both sovereign and ministers. The latter, with their master's sanction, made repeated attempts to crush them ; but on each occasion they discovered and

baffled the enterprise, overwhelming their enemies with signal vengeance. Forming a band closely united, and acquainted with every intrigue which might influence the palace, they exercised a vigilance which nothing could escape; and their power, accordingly, remained nearly unbroken, till it was crushed by the warlike founder of a new dynasty.

Superstition exercised a most degrading and pernicious influence upon the princes of this race. We have seen that the extravagant pretension of administering draughts which could confer immortality, deluded several monarchs, otherwise of considerable merit. Unfortunately the Tao-tse mixed up, not a harmless potion, but a violent medicine, which, frequently repeated, broke the constitution, disqualified the patient for active exertion, and finally brought him to a premature grave. Three emperors, almost in succession, came thus to an untimely end. In vain was Siuen-tsong, the last of these, and in other respects intelligent and well disposed, reminded of the fate of his predecessors, while the sufferings endured by himself appeared sufficient to open his eyes. He was deluded into the belief, that such a painful crisis could not but occur in the grand process of converting a mortal into an immortal frame; hence he persevered till, just when he imagined himself to have reached perpetual life, he sunk into the tomb. Others, embracing the sect of Fo or Boodh, were betrayed by its followers into the most puerile extravagances. Hien-tsong having been informed that a finger of that personage had been discovered, from which many miraculous benefits might be expected, caused it to be carried in repeated processions, attended by the nobles and

other great men; and one of the mandarins, who ventured to remonstrate against this folly, very nearly suffered death. Y-tsong, likewise, having learned that a bone of that eminent character had been found, ordered it to be brought to court, where the whole household, ranged in order, received it on their knees, and vied with each other in lavishing upon it tokens of honour. The latter sovereign, among other symptoms of effeminacy, was so devoted to music, that, being particularly delighted with the work of a certain composer, he made him captain of his guards. Under such rulers rebellion could not but rear its head, and China once more became the theatre of intestine conflict. The throne, reduced to the utmost weakness, was almost as certainly crushed by its defenders as by its assailants. Tchu-ouen, having first deserted the service of a rebel chief, repeatedly rescued Tchao-tsong from captivity, and thus, by united craft and daring, obtained the entire authority. He began by applying a cruel and extreme remedy to a great evil. The eunuchs were not only divested of their mischievous power, but devoted to a general proscription; several thousands perished; and the small remnant were employed in the most menial offices. As it was evident, however, that the emperor was held by this usurper in the most degrading bondage, movements began to be made for his deliverance. These, however, the rebel rendered abortive by the barbarous expedient of putting the unfortunate monarch to death. He at first raised his son, though a minor, to the throne; but soon resolving to complete his work, compelled this pageant to resign the sceptre into his hands. Deposition, according to the usual course of things, was succeeded, about a

year after, by a violent death ; and thus, by the hand of a daring villain, the mighty dynasty of the Tang was finally extinguished.

The new monarch, who, in conformity to precedent, chose to designate himself Tai-tsou, did not transmit to a distant posterity the dominion obtained by these deeds of violence. The long rule of the Tang was followed, as it had been preceded, by no fewer than five dynasties, called Heou-ou-tai, which lasted in all about fifty-three years ; that is, from A. D. 907 to 960 ; and were called, in their order, Heou-leang, Heou-tang, Heou-tcin, Heou-han, Heou-tcheou. They presented a continuance of the same gloomy scenes ; exhibiting the empire split among a number of independent chiefs, who even raised pretensions to the supreme power. Yet, amid this distraction, there reigned several whom China still ranks among her best rulers. Tchuang-tsong, the founder of the second of these families, had given at first an example of the most manly virtue ; and is said in all his early campaigns to have slept on the ground with a bell round his neck, that he might be prevented from indulging too long in rest. But soon after his accession, he was seized with such a passion for theatrical entertainments, that he frequently himself performed a part in them. He gave his entire confidence to actors, one of whom, named King-tsin, was considered as it were his eye and ear, and who, when he entered into the imperial presence, had his vanity gratified by seeing the greatest nobles and mandarins leave the apartment. Following the counsels of this fraternity, and of the eunuchs, the sovereign not only incurred the contempt of his subjects, but soon found himself assailed by tumults,

in one of which he perished. Ming-tsong, his successor, of Tartar origin, was throughout a mild and virtuous prince. He is said to have addressed nightly the following prayer to the Supreme Being:—"I was born a barbarian, in a savage country, yet, in the midst of the troubles that disturbed this empire, I was chosen to govern it. I make but one request, which is, that the Heavenly Majesty would condescend to watch over my conduct, and send me wise and experienced men, whose counsel may aid me to govern without error." Observing the injury done to the cultivated fields by hunting, he renounced that sport, and caused all his trained hawks and other birds of prey to be set at liberty. Though himself illiterate, he gave encouragement to learning; and in his time the art of printing is said to have been invented. It is true that an undue confidence placed in a base minister led him into some errors, and gave rise to several disturbances; but this guilty individual being put to death, the people on the whole, during his reign, enjoyed unwonted prosperity and repose. Chi-tsong, also, at the close of the last of these dynasties, distinguished himself as a beneficent, and at the same time as a vigorous ruler. The Chinese celebrate a speech which he made when, in a period of scarcity, he opened his granaries to the people. Some courtiers represented that it was doubtful if all of them could pay even the low rate exacted; but he asked in reply, if a father, when his children were starving, would refuse them bread because they could not pay for it. As the empire, however, was disturbed by a number of independent chiefs, who had taken advantage of its weakness and disunion, much

of his reign was spent in war before he was able to reduce them. At his death, his son, a minor, was at first raised to the throne ; but the respect for hereditary succession being much impaired by so many changes, Tchao-kouang-yn, his most distinguished general, was by the acclamation of the army invested with that dignity.

The new prince, who assumed the title of Tai-tsou, founded what was termed the dynasty of Song, one of the most celebrated, as well as longest, in the Chinese annals. It lasted 319 years, namely, from A. D. 960 to 1279. The country, which had now reached nearly its highest pitch of improvement, was during the greater part of that period ruled by a succession of able and good sovereigns. Tai-tsou had the usual task of subduing the numerous independent states which had sprung up within the empire ; and before the end of his reign he succeeded almost completely, unless with respect to one Tartar tribe, who were so warlike and so firmly established, that no efforts could dislodge them. These were the Leao, calling themselves also Khi-tan, who had occupied Pe-che-lee and the northern districts nearly as far as the Hoang-ho. The barrier of the Great Wall was thereby rendered of no avail ; and China had to encounter many hard struggles with these barbarians. Still, as long as the royal power remained in vigour, they were restrained within the limits just mentioned ; the finest and most fruitful provinces being preserved untouched.

Learning met with ample encouragement under this race of governors. Tai-tsoung, the second, spent much time in reading and conversing with studious men ; perusing daily three kiuen, or small volumes,

till, it is said, he had gone through a work of 1000 kiuen, on the best mode of procuring and maintaining peace in the empire. He gave great encouragement to the collecting of rare books, bestowing the dignity of mandarin on any one who brought to him a certain number. Gin-tsong made the records of the Tang family be written with care ; and his successor ordered Sse-ma-kouang, one of the chief nobles, to compile a regular digest of the Chinese annals. This personage, in conjunction with other learned men, produced at the end of the reign the Tong-kien-kang-mou, in 294 books, which is esteemed the most elaborate and authentic work of this description, and is the same which has been translated by Mailla. Towards the close of the dynasty, there arose a class of men who indulged in bold speculations, which spread alarm in a court where every thing had been studiously moulded by authority and prescription. Tchu-hi, who took the lead in this career, did not indeed dispute the long-established doctrines of Confucius and Mencius ; but, under colour of interpreting their writings, he introduced views which, by the adherents of antiquity, were considered very apocryphal. From the prominent place which letters held in the political system, these differences not only disturbed the intercourse of private life, but agitated violently the court and the state. An aged counsellor, predicting the ruin of the empire from these discussions, suggested the following course, which certainly does not appear a very effectual mode of attaining truth : " To enjoin those who are to take a share in the government to determine positively the doctrine which they are to follow, and to which they must

remain inviolably attached ; not to permit every one to take up opinions according to his fancy ; and to punish severely those firebrands who filled the court with intrigues and factions." Afterwards, another mandarin, complaining that obscure men, seeking by any means to bring themselves into notice, designedly spread false and sophistical theories, proposed that all the learned in the empire should for the future be bound to adhere to the doctrine of Confucius, and prohibited from paying any regard to the authority of commentators. This was a principle, the enforcement of which might indeed produce an outward peace, but which tended to prevent the exercise of thought and the improvement of the human mind. It was conformable, however, to the feelings and views of an absolute prince. A mandate was issued to this effect, and, notwithstanding the loud clamours of the liberal party, was carried into rigorous execution. Tchu-hi was obliged to resign his dignity of mandarin and retire ; while Tsai-yuen-ting, his principal disciple, was sent into exile. Fifty-nine others, several of whom had shared the first offices under the crown, were declared incapable of again exercising any high function.

These monarchs appear to have been exposed in a considerable degree, though not quite so much as some of their predecessors, to the delusions of the Tao-tse, their arts of magic, and the cup of immortality. Tchin-tsong, otherwise a good and even wise emperor, was persuaded by bad advisers into a strange idea, that it was lawful to employ feigned miracles with the view of increasing his authority. One morning, he related a dream announcing the descent of a celestial book ; and soon after, in consequence doubt-

less of previous arrangements, tidings were brought that a casket had been found containing this wonderful production, wrapped in numerous folds of silk. The sovereign received it with the greatest pomp, and caused a magnificent temple to be erected for its reception. He afterwards pretended that his illustrious ancestor Ching-tsou had appeared and held long conversations with him. The courtiers, while secretly deriding these wonders, affected the most unreserved belief: only one faithful servant assured him, but in vain, that not a man gave credit to them, or would in future times; and that these follies would render him contemptible both with the present age and with posterity.

As this dynasty sunk into weakness, China was more and more closely pressed by the Tartar states, which had effected a lodgement within its frontier. A new enemy also appeared in a tribe which, under the successive names of Ou-ki and of Mo-ho, of Niu-tchin and Niu-tchi, and latterly under the diminutive appellation of Kin, founded one of the most powerful kingdoms of Asia. These had their original abode in the region north of Leao, extending along the frontier of Corea as far as the Eastern Sea. When first observed they were in a condition of extreme rudeness, dwelling in tents, and without written language, or any form of law or polity. Part of them, however, being subdued by the Leao, were forced to adopt some measure of refinement; so that they were afterwards divided into the civilized Niu-tchi and the barbarous Niu-tchi. These last, under the original name of Kin, and led by a succession of able chiefs, began to aim at schemes of conquest. They fought entirely on horseback; their mode of

conducting a battle was to approach in four grand divisions from different quarters, let fly a shower of arrows, then retreat, presently to return and discharge fresh volleys, till the enemy were exhausted and their ranks thinned, when they rushed forward, and with drawn sabres engaged in close combat. Their attacks were for some time despised by the Leao; but, gaining victory after victory, they at length reduced the capital, and established their dominion over the whole territory. The court of China, accustomed to consider the Khi-tan as their most formidable enemies, had exulted and even aided in the successes of the Kin. But the latter had no sooner completed their triumph, than they began to meditate the overthrow of the Song dynasty itself. At this epoch, the Chinese government, with an unpardonable imprudence, treated them with the greatest haughtiness, and thus afforded the pretext which they anxiously sought for invading the empire. After some time spent in deceiving a weak sovereign with empty professions, the Kin advanced against him in great force. His effeminate troops took flight at the first onset of these hardy barbarians, who succeeded without opposition in passing the mighty barrier of the Hoang-ho. They then proceeded and laid siege to Kai-fong-fou, an immense and splendid city, which had for a considerable time been the residence of the court. The emperor consented to purchase peace on the most humiliating conditions, yet gained only a short truce; for the enemy, having again recrossed the Hoang-ho, renewed the siege; while he yielded, notwithstanding some vigorous exertions which were made in his favour by the loyal part of his subjects, to the most pusillanimous ad-

vice. Hoping to negotiate a peace, he went into the camp of the enemy, who, availing themselves of the circumstance, carried him off with all his family into Tartary, and appointed a new sovereign in his room. The Chinese, however, rejected the person thus imposed upon them, and placed the rightful heir on the throne; but the Tartars, who thereby gained a pretext, poured in their numerous hordes, which, aided by intestine divisions, overran the whole country north of the Yang-tse-kiang, crossed that river, and penetrated into Kiang-see and Tche-kiang. They, in short, became masters of the northern parts of China; and Kai-fong-fou, which had been the ancient capital, now became their metropolis. But a new enemy was already approaching, before whom Kin, Khi-tan, Hia, and Chinese, were alike doomed to bend.

The tribes from which the empire had hitherto principally suffered, were situated on her northern frontier. But farther to the west, between the high mountain-chains of the Bogdo and the Altai, is a much more extensive plain, covered with nomadic tribes, retaining, in the fullest degree, the Scythian and Tartar character,—roving continually from place to place, residing in large moveable tents conveyed on wagons, driving before them their herds, on which they entirely subsisted, placing their chief luxury in eating horseflesh and drinking koumiss, a fermented liquor from mare's milk. Their weapon was the arrow, which they discharged on horseback, alternately advancing and flying. They always closely united the character of shepherds, robbers, and warriors. Divided usually into a number of hordes (*ordas*), or little moveable encamp-

ments under hereditary leaders, they wasted their strength in internal contests, and through their disunion were little formidable to the surrounding tribes. Occasionally, however, when the genius of one powerful chief united numerous clans under his standard, their roaming habits and facility in transporting the means of subsistence, enabled them easily to assemble in large bodies, and move from one extremity of the continent to another. In such circumstances, they found it easy to carry conquest and devastation into all the neighbouring states. Hence it was not long before the region now described became the seat of a power destined to subvert the empires of the East and of the West, and to extend its dominion from the Pacific to the frontiers of Germany. The Mongols or Mongous, whose name was soon to become so conspicuous, were then a wandering tribe, who came under the rule of Temoutchin or Temugin, a name afterwards changed into that of Genghis, Zingis, or Tchinkis, the most formidable of all the Asiatic conquerors. Some of the early travellers have represented him as rising from the situation of a blacksmith, but St Croix* seems to have proved that this idea arose merely from the insignia assumed by one of his ancestors; though, indeed, the art in question, being employed in the manufacture of arms, is held in honour among all rude nations. Some oriental historians have even deified this great conqueror, and dwell fondly upon prodigies alleged to have distinguished his birth,—that he was born with a piece of clotted blood in his hand, and that his horoscope, when examined by a learned astrologer, portended a mighty warrior.

* History of Genghis Khan (1 vol. 8vo, English edition, London, 1722), chap. i. p. 7.

These fables, though generally received in the East, have been disputed by some writers even there, and have excited warm controversies, into which it would be little edifying to enter.* So small were the beginnings of this fortunate leader, that his influence was for some time almost confined to the friends whom he gained by giving permission to hunt, and with whom he shared the products of the chase. Thus he not only secured their attachment, but induced many other tribes to range themselves under his banner. Still his early enterprises were conducted on so small a scale that, in marching from one place to another, he was often in danger from bands of robbers. One of these, by its numbers, when Temugin, seeing two wild-ducks soaring high in the air, ordered Soo, a skilful archer, to bring one down; an injunction which was obeyed with such prompt dexterity, that the bandits took the alarm and passed on. At another time the young chief sustained so signal a reverse, that he was one night left with only two faithful followers, who, during a tempest of snow, spread over him their felt cloaks, remaining themselves exposed to its fury. Yet amid these vicissitudes he made such progress as excited an alarm that he was aiming at universal dominion over the hordes, who resolved by timely union to avert this hazard. Five of their principal leaders met at the source of a river, killed a white horse, and, as the blood flowed on the ground, vowed to remain faithful to the league for common security. Temugin, however, encountered and broke this confederacy, whose abortive efforts served only farther to aggrandize him.

About this time, his services were courted by

* *History of Genghis Khan*, chap. i. pp. 10, 11.

Oung or Ouang Khan,—a chief who, from his court at Karakorum, had established a sort of empire over those pastoral regions. This is the sovereign celebrated in Europe under the singular appellation of Prester John, and represented as a Christian uniting the attributes of priest and king. It is unnecessary to add, that the description now given is wholly destitute of truth, and seems to have been suggested to some Nestorian,* by the toleration and even favour which, in common with other Tartar princes, he showed to Christians, and partly perhaps by his pretensions to be the vicegerent on earth of the Supreme Divinity. Chiefly through the valour of Temugin, and the intrepid band formed under him, this ruler became victorious over his warlike enemies. The Tartar, however, soon became a greater man than his master, who was easily persuaded by artful courtiers that his ally and general was aiming at the crown which he had defended. The historians of Zingis treat this as the basest calumny ; yet we, knowing his ambitious character, may perhaps have some hesitation in fully acquitting him. Certainly, on learning that there was an intention to seize his person, he escaped, and commenced open hostilities against Oung Khan, who was now his father-in-law. The latter was totally defeated, and, seeking refuge in a remote place, was discovered and killed. Temugin then seated himself on the throne of Karakorum, and having vanquished the Naymans, the most powerful of the independent tribes, obtained the undisputed supremacy over all the hordes that occupied the vast deserts of Eastern Tartary. He assumed the title of emperor, and exchanged his

* History of Genghis Khan, chap. i. p. 24-26.

name of Temugin for that of Zingis, which he rendered the most formidable ever known in the East.

He now openly aspired at the dominion of Asia, and even of the world. Under him and his successors, the great empires of Persia, of the Caliphate, and of Kiev, were subverted. When the Mongols extended their views of conquest so widely, China presented too rich a prize to escape ; and the successes of Zingis soon brought him into contact with the kingdom which the Kin had established in the northern part of that empire. This powerful state, having become in some degree civilized, had attracted great respect among the Tartar nations, from whom it was accustomed to receive a tribute. But now, when its ruler sent to make this demand from Zingis, and required that it should be accompanied with a distinct acknowledgment of homage, he not only refused it with an expression of the most lofty indignation, but made active preparations for invading this state on such a scale as might ensure its conquest. The monarch of the Kin, though early warned by his best counsellors of these designs, scarcely believed his danger till the moment he beheld the country covered with the innumerable squadrons of Mongolian cavalry. Having defeated him in several actions, they overran a large extent of his territory, committing the most frightful ravages. It became necessary to purchase a peace, or rather truce, by an ample tribute in silk and gold, as well as by bestowing in marriage a princess of high rank ; and only a short respite was thus obtained. The Tartar renewed the war ; and the Chinese, imprudently viewing the Kin as a common enemy, aided the power that was destined to overwhelm

both. The force of Zingis was for some time partly occupied in subduing the kingdom of the Hia, on the north-western frontier ; but having accomplished this object, he re-entered, with an overwhelming force, the territory of the Kin, and subdued the greater part of it northwards of the Hoang-ho.

In considering how this conquest might be best improved, a number of the principal officers represented that the country was rendered useless by being covered with grain for the support of a mean and mechanical race, while the noble steed of the warrior suffered extremely from the want of forage. They advised, therefore, that after making a general massacre of the useless inhabitants, the arable grounds should be turned into grass ; and that the whole of China, so far as they conquered it, should be converted into an immense pasture-field. The victor was not disinclined to listen to this savage counsel ; but there happened to be among his followers Yeliutchoutsai, a captive chief of the royal blood of Leao, who, having seen the power of his house destroyed by the Kin, had been induced to enter the Mongol service. This person proved one of the most extensive benefactors of the human race that ever existed, for he not only preserved the civilisation of China, but was instrumental in communicating it largely to its rude conquerors. He combated the intention of the Mongol by showing, not its dreadful and atrocious character, but the greater profit which might be drawn from an opposite system,—how, by leaving this numerous and industrious people to the undisturbed exercise of their occupations, he might levy tribute amply sufficient, not only to supply the wants of his troops, but to gratify that taste

for splendour which he had begun to cherish. The sound judgment of Zingis felt the weight of these arguments. He embraced the advice of his wise counsellor, who was employed, under this and the following reign, in organizing a regular system of administration, to which the Mongols had been utter strangers. A schedule of taxes was framed, which, being imposed chiefly upon luxuries, enriched the sovereign without occasioning any oppression ; the arbitrary conduct of the military governors was checked ; fixed laws were proclaimed, and tribunals established. A prohibition was also issued, though not always rigidly enforced, against the barbarous system of general massacre, which, in cases of conquest or capture, the Mongols had till now invariably pursued. The minister employed even Chinese subjects of the Song dynasty, which, with other innovations, excited violent discontents among the fierce old warriors ; but he persevered, and, being supported by the wisdom of the monarch, succeeded in effecting a great and beneficial change.

In 1227, the life of Zingis came to a close ; but this important event did not, even for the shortest interval, arrest the tide of conquest which he had set in motion. A race of warlike sons continued to spread the Mongol dominion over both the East and the West. Ogotai or Oktai, his immediate successor, determined finally to annex to it the entire kingdom of the Kin. In a council of war, it was observed, that the chain of frontier-fortresses still possessed by their opponents would long hold out against the rude machinery of the Mongols. It was therefore suggested, as the most effectual plan, to strike a blow against the centre of their power,

by making a circuitous march, crossing the Hoang-ho, and coming at once upon Kai-fong-fou, their capital. This movement was effected ; the enemy were completely routed at San-fong ; and the metropolis, in which the king with all his court had sought refuge, was invested. The siege appears to have been almost without a parallel in the annals of human suffering. It was then, perhaps, the largest city in the world, containing a population of two or three millions, swelled by numerous fugitives, who sought in it an asylum from the Tartars. According to the statements of the Chinese historians, which, it may be hoped, are greatly exaggerated, a million of men perished in sixteen days by the sword, and 900,000 by the pestilence which succeeded. The Mongols filled up the ditches with straw and branches ; but the walls, built of a compact earth, consolidated for centuries, had acquired a consistence like that of iron. The besiegers had no means of battering them, except by huge millstones projected from towers of bamboo, which made only a slight impression. The garrison, on the other hand, employed more efficient machines, the nature of which is not very clearly described ; though it is manifest that the force of gunpowder must have been employed, both in throwing implements of destruction, and in causing them to explode and spread death through the enemy's ranks. Extreme distress, rather than the want of the means of defence, at length induced the king to purchase, by extensive sacrifices, what was called a peace ; and it deserves notice, as marking the altered taste of the rude conquerors, that among their numerous demands were included a learned doctor and a number of girls skilled in embroidery.

The victors retired ; but it was only, as before, to return speedily with an augmented force ; and the unfortunate prince, on whose mind the late events had made a deep impression, imprudently furnished pretexts for the renewal of hostilities. The Mongol troops were soon again on their march to the capital ; and their ruler sought and obtained, for the meditated destruction of the Kin, the co-operation of the Song emperor. The latter was admonished that he was thereby strengthening a power already much too strong, and breaking down the only barrier by which he was himself protected ; but the long habit at this court of viewing that people as their greatest enemies, and, perhaps, the hope of sharing in their spoil, prevailed over sounder considerations. Kai-fong-fou was again invested ; but, after all its sufferings, it would have still possessed ample means of resistance, had not treason arisen within its walls. Tsoui-li, who commanded in one of the quarters, conceived the criminal design of betraying it to the enemy, in the hope of reigning as their vassal. Without venturing openly to admit the besiegers, he paralysed the means of defence ; he assassinated the two chief ministers ; and having himself usurped possession of the city, he seized on the jewels and other precious effects of the crown. At the same time, he ordered, by proclamation, all the inhabitants to deliver up their gold and silver, putting to a cruel death every individual who attempted to secrete the smallest portion. He sent out to the Mongol general the queens and all the members of the blood-royal. The princes were immediately put to death ; while the ladies were ordered to proceed into the heart of Tartary, and, being obliged to travel

without the slightest preparation, suffered the most extreme distress. At length the city was taken ; and historians record with satisfaction, that the victorious Tartars, hastening to the house of Tsoui-li, rifled it of all the treasures which he had so unjustly accumulated. Soupoutai, their commander, then requested of his master that, according to ancient usage, the whole inhabitants, amounting still to 1,400,000 families, should be put to the sword. Ogotai was preparing to issue the mandate ; but Yeliu-tchoutsai again interposed, to plead, not the rights of humanity, but the great benefit which would arise from the labours of so large a body of industrious inhabitants. The chief hesitated some time at such a sweeping innovation upon Mongol practice ; but at length he yielded to the advice of his excellent minister, and Kai-fong-fou was saved.

There remained still Tsai-tcheou, a large and very strong town, the last bulwark of the falling empire of the Kin ; but their prince, when besieged in it by the united forces of the Mongols and the Song, was soon sensible of his approaching fate. His mind was deeply afflicted, not less by the anticipation of personal suffering, than by the idea of being classed with those unworthy sovereigns under whom dynasties perish,—a reproach, in fact, which he did not merit, being rather the victim of adverse circumstances than of his own supineness. He determined, however, not to survive the catastrophe ; and when it became inevitable, procured death by strangulation, while all his principal officers, and more than 500 soldiers, plunged into the river and perished.

After the downfall of the Kin, the court of the

Song, which had imprudently contributed to it, as well as to exalt a power greater than either, ought to have adopted a conciliatory policy. But on the contrary, when the Mongols, conscious of their strength, held a high tone, and appropriated to themselves an undue share of the conquered country, the other rashly determined to plunge into war. The troops of Ogotai, immediately entering the Chinese territory, spread alarm by their rapid conquests ; though several circumstances soon arose to interrupt their career. This leader died, and the reins of government fell into the hands of a princess-regent, who, enthralled by an unpopular minister, disregarded the advice of Yeliu-tchoutsai, who died of grief ; and nothing of importance occurred till, by the demise of her son, her own power terminated. The administration now fell into the vigorous hands of Mengko, whom Europeans call Mangu Khan. He appointed his brother Houpilai, a brave and intelligent prince, to carry on the war with China ; but becoming jealous of him, and taking the command in person, he was himself killed at the siege of a strong fortress. Some time was now lost before the other could return to Tartary and secure the succession ; for which reason he concluded a peace, making the Kiang the boundary between the empires.

The Song, encouraged by his departure, soon gave fresh provocation ; and when he sent ambassadors, apparently with the sincere desire of a pacific arrangement, they were thrown into prison. Houpilai then renewed the war, which was carried on afterwards without intermission. The attack had hitherto been made on the more remote and western provinces ; but now siege was laid to Siang-yang-

fou, on the Han, a tributary of the Yang-tse-kiang, of which it was supposed in a great measure to command the passage. This bulwark of China made a brave resistance during no less than five years ; and it was at last surrendered only in consequence of the governor having been disgusted by the treatment he received from court. Peyen, the Mongol commander, then advanced, and forced the passage of the Kiang, inflicting a complete defeat on the Chinese, both by land and water. From this time a general panic struck the armies and councils of the Song. The invaders pushed on, and with little opposition entered Nan-king, the greatest city of the empire, and long its southern capital. Many of the chiefs and governors, disgusted with the violent measures of Kia-sse-tao, to whom a feeble prince had intrusted the whole authority, went over to the enemy. Peyen proceeded from conquest to conquest, till he arrived at Hang-tcheou-fou, the splendid capital of the Song, described by Marco Polo as presenting quite a magic scene, and as the most beautiful city in the world. Kong-tsong, the reigning emperor, being only seven years old, the administration was in the hands of the empress-mother, who, giving way to her fears, sent the imperial seal in token of submission. On the entrance of one of the victorious generals, she said to the prince,—“ The son of Heaven has granted you life, it is just that you should bow to the earth in gratitude.” She and her child then made the nine prostrations, striking the earth with their foreheads ; after which they were conveyed to the court of Houpilai.

All was not over : China was astonished and indignant to find herself, for the first time, subdued

by a barbarian potentate. Several faithful commanders, who still adhered to the standard of the falling dynasty, placed on the throne Y-ouang, another of its princes, and summoned their countrymen to rise in his defence. The people, accordingly, rallying round him in great numbers, gained several advantages over the invader; and being favoured by circumstances which obliged Houpilai to withdraw a great proportion of his troops northward, they recovered a considerable part of the conquered territory. Upon this the Mongol chief ordered his whole army to return; when the Chinese, overpowered by superior numbers, were driven successively from every point which they attempted to occupy. A new emperor, chosen to fill the vacancy which occurred at this crisis, found himself compelled to become a wanderer on the ocean. At length, on his being shut up in a narrow strait by a fleet of the Mongols, one of his nobles exhorted him not to fall alive into the hands of the enemy, but rather to court a death worthy of the great dynasty of which he was the last survivor. Having said this, he took him in his arms, and they plunged together into the waves. Thus, in A. D. 1279, closed the mighty race of Song, after having given to the empire eighteen sovereigns, several of whom rank with the most illustrious that ever swayed the sceptre.

China was now subjected to a foreign rule; which, however, was administered by good princes,—Houpilai, Timur, and Haichan. They governed, it is true, upon Tartar principles, not allowing the natives to hold any high office; and literary merit was no longer the passport to greatness. But Aiyulipalipata, of a more enlightened and polished charac-

ter, encouraged learning, restored the usual examinations and competitions, and studied to amalgamate the institutions of the two people. Several sovereigns followed, whose reigns were much disturbed by conspiracies among the nobles; marking a gradual diminution of the respect formerly paid to the race of Zingis. At length the sceptre came into the hands of Chun-ti, who was stained with all the vices which adhere to the representative of an old and decaying dynasty,—voluptuous, proud, and tyrannical. The nation, still desirous of a native rule, eagerly took advantage of this weakness on the part of their conquerors. Insurrection burst forth simultaneously in every province of the empire; the leaders, gaining daily new adherents, rose from chiefs of banditti into generals, and from generals into kings; and, at length, they contended for the possession of the country more with one another than with the Tartar prince, whose domain was hemmed in within very narrow limits. The emperor, meantime, seemingly unconscious that his dominion was falling to pieces, amused himself with the graceful displays of female dancers, whose director he raised to the dignity of prime-minister. Amid this turbulence and sedition, one name soon stood prominent; for while some of the insurgents recommended certain descendants of the Song and Han dynasties, a private individual, Tchu-yuentchang, who had first worn the habit of a bonze, and then entered the army as a common soldier, began to advance a claim for himself. He was speedily distinguished by the conduct he adopted, so different from that of the other candidates for supreme power, who were only robbers on a great scale, pil-

laging the country, and committing every species of cruelty. He, on the contrary, instructed his followers, whom he chose to denominate the Ming, that they should observe strictly the laws of humanity towards the vanquished, respect private property, and protect the peaceable citizen. As soon as he had made himself master of some portion of the kingdom, he left the care of military operations to the ablest of his commanders, while he applied himself to regulate the internal administration, to revive and cherish learning, and to restore the ancient laws and institutions. Thus the wish for his success became general among the people, who hoped, by his means, to see anarchy brought to an end, and the empire restored to its former lustre. Fresh bands of volunteers continually joined him, while his rivals held their followers only by the bond of personal attachment, or by the love of plunder. Having subdued his competitors, he triumphed so far against his foreign enemies as to compel the Mongol prince to retreat into Tartary, where he soon after died. Thus terminated, A. D. 1368, this mighty and celebrated dynasty, which, if reckoned from the first successes of Zingis, had lasted 162 years ; but from the final conquest of China by Houpilai only 89.

The founder of the Ming family, who assumed the name of Hong-vou, did not consider his victory complete until he had fully extirpated the race of Tartar sovereigns. Its representative, then an infant, being brought to Nan-king, he was advised to secure the throne by putting the child to death ; but he acted the more humane part of rearing him in his palace as a prince of the third order, and, on his coming of age, sent him to take possession of his

native dominions. Having successively subdued Shan-see, Shen-see, and Yun-nan, and checked the inroads of the Si-fan and the Tou-fan, he once more united all China under one crown. At length, after a reign of thirty years, he died, leaving behind him the character of an excellent ruler, devoted to virtue and the love of the arts.

Scarcely had he expired, when those troubles began which continued without ceasing to agitate the dynasty of Ming. Hong-vou left the throne to his grandson Kien-ouen-ti, a youth of sixteen,—an arrangement which was deeply regretted, because his uncles, particularly the eldest, were able and ambitious, and every way capable of filling the throne. In fact, it proved that, at this unsettled era, reverence for the strict order of hereditary succession was again greatly diminished. The Prince of Yen, next brother of the emperor, considered it wrong that a boy had been preferred to him, and finding numerous partisans ready to second his views, soon raised the standard of revolt. He gained a complete victory; the capital was invested and taken; and the young sovereign, according to the custom too prevalent on such occasions, was about to have recourse to suicide. A mandarin, however, strongly attached to his juvenile master, persuaded him to take to flight under the disguise of a bonze. This officer even produced a casket which he pretended had been left by Hong-vou in contemplation of such an emergency: it contained the robe, bonnet, and sandals of the order, and even scissors for cutting off the hair. Kien-ouen-ti was persuaded; and thus attired, and attended by a faithful band, who, the better to elude pursuit, divided themselves into five parties, he suc-

ceeded in escaping from the capital. The fugitives did not pause till they had reached the remote province of Yun-nan, where, by continually removing from place to place, they contrived to prevent discovery. In this manner he continued a wanderer not less than thirty-eight years; at the end of which time he endeavoured to sooth his sorrows by composing a poem in which he lamented his singular fate,—born to so great an empire, yet reduced to such extreme distress, and able only to preserve a miserable life by skulking in the most obscure parts of his dominions, while another in his palace enjoyed his rightful inheritance. This writing fell into the hands of an enemy, who betrayed it to the governor of the district. The fugitive prince was arrested and conveyed to Pe-king, where he was confined till his death.

The victorious usurper, under the name of Yong-lo, proved an able and active though severe ruler. He made great efforts to regulate and restore the literary institutions. A very voluminous code of laws was framed under his auspices. Morals and philosophy were also reformed agreeably to his direction, chiefly upon the principles of Tchu-hi, which, though proscribed in that writer's lifetime, now again obtained a high reputation.

After the death of this monarch, followed by two short reigns, the throne was filled by Ing-tsong, under whom all the vices of a voluptuous and declining dynasty began to be manifest. The eunuchs regained that paramount influence which had been for some time suspended, and one of them, through the weakness of his master, acquired the undivided management of affairs. In these circumstances the

Tartars again mustered their strength, and entered China with a most formidable army. The sovereign marched against them in person ; but as his minister, though quite unacquainted with military affairs, assumed the sole command, the army was both ill supplied and ill conducted. On coming to a general engagement, he was totally routed ; and the prince, seeing that he was in the midst of the conquerors, allowed himself to be made captive without resistance. The victor, however, treated with rude courtesy his illustrious prisoner, carrying him into Tartary, where he feasted him on horseflesh, and made his wives and concubines dance before him. Meantime the Chinese armies prepared again for the field. King-ti, a new sovereign, was placed on the throne ; and the invaders, after having invested Pe-king, were repulsed and obliged to fall back. The Tartar, chagrined at these losses, resolved to put his captive to death ; but immediately, influenced by the hope of creating a civil war, he restored him to his liberty, and sent him home. King-ti determined to hold the sceptre which had fallen into his hands ; yet this circumstance did not give rise to any commotion, the liberated prince having waited till his rival was seized with a mortal illness, when he quietly resumed the government. The following emperors, besides displaying certain weaknesses in regard to morals, relapsed into the absurd whims of the Tao-tsæ, employing themselves in the search after the cup of immortality and the art of making gold and silver. Hiao-tsong could with difficulty be dissuaded from rearing a lofty pyramid to be entitled " The Tower which prolongs Life." Chitsong collected from every quarter volumes relating

to this superstition, and had at one time formed the design of relinquishing for two years the reins of government, that he might exercise the functions of a Tao-tse priest. While the monarchs were thus engaged, the empire was rent with the most dreadful calamities. Bands of robbers, collecting in every quarter, gradually swelled into rebel armies; the Tartars became more and more formidable; and Japanese pirates ravaged the coasts. In Tartary, the name of the Niu-tchi, which had once merged in that of Kin, revived, and again spread terror. It soon yielded, however, to one of their own hordes, the Mantchoos or Mandshurs, who by successive victories attained a complete supremacy over the others. Uniting all the tribes of this region under their standard, they conquered Leao-tong, and began to make inroads into China. At the moment, too, when their arms acquired the greatest vigour, the misery of intestine war had risen to its utmost height. Among numerous revolts, that of Li-tse-tching was the most alarming. Having gained a signal victory, and finding himself master of a third part of the country, he assumed the imperial title, and proclaimed himself the founder of a new dynasty, which he named Ta-chun. He then marched upon Pe-king, which, though garrisoned by 150,000 men, fell into his hands through the misconduct of its defenders. Hoai-tsong, the last of the Ming family, giving up all for lost, called for his daughter, a princess of fifteen, and, covering his face with his left hand, with a sabre in his right he struck a blow which he believed to be mortal; but she was saved by the care of a faithful servant. The empress and all his wives then devoted themselves to voluntary death. He

now rang the bell with which he was wont to summon his grandees ; but when none appeared, he wrote a lamentation over his fate ; and, addressing to his successor an entreaty that he would spare his people, he strangled himself in his girdle.

The usurper did not reap the fruits of his bloody triumph. Ou-san-kouei, the Chinese general commanding on the frontier against the Tartars, when he heard of this dreadful catastrophe, determined to postpone every other consideration to that of revenge. Having opened a negotiation with the enemy, an arrangement was made, by which the Mantchoos were to unite their forces with his in order to punish the wrongs of the former dynasty. The confederate army marched upon Pe-king, when Li-tsetching, defeated in two successive battles, was obliged to evacuate that capital. The Tartars entered ; when, to the dismay of the inhabitants, they took possession of it in their own name. They are said to have had at this time no supreme ruler, the executive power being divided among a number of chiefs. But on viewing themselves as masters of so vast a dominion, they judged it proper to name a sovereign ; though by electing a youth only seven years old, they retained in their own hands all the real authority. Even Ou-san-kouei was persuaded to own this new monarch, and accept the title of governor under him ; but the Chinese in the south, imbued with strong national feelings, indignantly rejected the barbarous yoke thus attempted to be imposed upon them. A prince of the blood-royal was elected emperor at Nan-king, under the name of Chi-tsoutchang-ti ; who, instead of making those exertions which his precarious situation required, yielded

himself to voluptuous indolence, as if he had been placed on an hereditary throne. His power was, moreover, weakened by the claims of a competitor. The Tartars meantime administered affairs ably and wisely, gaining over the subordinate rulers, and conciliating the people by the adoption of Chinese laws and institutions. Encouraged by the weak and divided state of the south, they began their march; and, passing first the Hoang-ho and then the Yang-tse-kiang, advanced upon Nan-king, which surrendered almost without resistance. The two rival emperors successively fled, and one of them drowned himself. The crown was offered to a third, from whose merit great hopes were cherished, but he refused it. The invaders speedily overran the fine provinces of Ki-ang-nan and Tche-kiang, and invested Hang-tcheou-fou. The prince who commanded, seeing all hope of defence vain, surrendered himself at discretion, stipulating only for the safety of the mandarins and other inhabitants. The Tartar chief deprived this brave man of life; professing regret, that the spirit of resistance could in no other way be extinguished. The victor now sought to consolidate his acquisitions by issuing a proclamation, ordering, on pain of death, that the native dress should be exchanged for that of the conquerors. This imprudent mandate produced an effect most opposite to his hopes; for the people, who, with comparative indifference had seen their empire fall, were transformed into heroes in defence of their hair. They rose in large bodies, and soon finding leaders, attacked and defeated the Tartars in several bloody encounters. An obstinate war ensued, in the course of which even Nan-king was threatened. It

is thought that, had all the Chinese leaders united, they would have expelled the invader ; but, as each sought his individual aggrandizement, they were successively vanquished. About 1652, the Tartars were masters of the whole land ; though the native standard still floated on the ocean. Tching-tching-kong, whom the Dutch call Koxinga, a mariner of humble descent, collecting around him all who were possessed with a national spirit, and combining in his own person the characters of merchant, prince, and pirate, organized a most formidable power, by which he rendered himself not only complete master of the sea, but also of the principal ports of Fo-kien. He made even repeated inroads into the country, in one of which he laid siege to Nan-king. A considerable time elapsed before the invaders, aided, as will afterwards appear, by the Dutch, succeeded in exterminating this piratical power, and in establishing their dominion.

Amid these events, Chun-tchi, the young Tartar emperor, grew up to manhood. Guided, while a minor, by the advice of experienced and able counsellors, he showed himself, when at mature age, well skilled in the art of reigning. He not only adopted completely the Chinese system of admitting to office only after strict examination, but took much pains to maintain the purity of election, and to guard against bribery. To secure Tartar influence without degrading the conquered people, he doubled the number of the tribunals or boards, selecting one-half of the members from either nation.

In 1661, Chun-tchi was succeeded by his son, Kang-hi, aged only eight years ; during whose minority, the government was ably administered by

four lords, who maintained a rigid adherence to ancient laws and institutions. But the prince himself, at an early age, assumed the direction of affairs, and began to display those great talents, which afterwards ranked him with the most illustrious of the Chinese sovereigns. To his regulations, perhaps, are mainly owing the unity and peace which the empire has exhibited for more than a century. This is ascribed by Du Halde to the indefatigable application of the prince to all the affairs of state,—his judgment and penetration in the choice of his principal officers,—his economy and aversion to luxury in regard to himself, with his liberality and magnificence in every thing that concerned the good of his dominions,—his tenderness and even active benevolence towards his people,—his steady and vigorous execution of the law,—his continual watchfulness over the conduct of his viceroys and governors, with the absolute command which he maintained over himself.* His liberal and enlightened spirit was early shown in discerning the defects of the calendar, and employing in its correction the European missionaries, whom the four regents had persecuted with the utmost cruelty. He even permitted the free exercise of their religion, so that they cherished for some time faint hopes of his becoming a convert. Ultimately, however, he was persuaded by the mandarins and the Li-pou tribunal to renew the wonted penalties against the Gospel; on which occasion, he is said to have particularly derided the spiritual supremacy claimed by the Pope.

Kang-hi, master of China and Eastern Tartary,

* General History of China, vol. i. p. 496.

early took a share in certain contests which arose among the western tribes, not probably without some view that his own dominion would be thereby extended. Espousing the cause of the Kalkas against the Eluths, he marched at the head of an army which, including servants and followers, is represented as not short of a million. The difficulty of the roads, however, and the scarcity of provisions, soon reduced this numerous host to great distress. The emperor was even advised to return, which he refused to do; but by conciliatory proposals to the Kaldan of the Eluths, accompanied by the offer of a princess of the blood in marriage, he endeavoured to bring the war to an honourable termination. That chief, however, turned a deaf ear to every overture, till, having unexpectedly encountered a division of the imperial army, he was completely defeated, and forthwith deserted by a great part of his followers. Yet farther negotiation was required before the kaldan would agree to a treaty, nominally owning the supremacy of the empire.

Previous to the accession of Kang-hi, a certain collision had taken place between Russia and China. The former, during the latter half of the sixteenth century, had, with astonishing rapidity and with very small forces, overrun the whole of Siberia, and even reached the Eastern Ocean. When her troops had penetrated thus far, the navigation of the Amoor, which rolls its great stream eastward into an open sea, while all the other rivers of Siberia flow northwards into the Frozen Ocean, became of the most obvious importance. Nor were there wanting some daring adventurers to make the attempt. Khabaroff, in 1646, with 150 men, sailing up the

Lena, the Olekma, and the Toughir, and down the Ourka, reached the Amoor. He descended the river, and, with the aid of musketry, drove before him the Daours, taking three of their forts, but staining his triumph with great cruelty. This incident soon drew the attention of the Chinese government, which considered this region as part of Mantchoo Tartary. A desultory warfare began, and was continued thirty years; at the end of which period the two monarchs agreed to send a mission to the frontier, to fix a mutual boundary and terminate these harassing disputes. There was little difficulty in drawing a line of demarcation through the trackless deserts by which the empires were separated; though the Russians made a resolute struggle for the fort of Yacsa, by which they might command the navigation of the Amoor. On this point, however, they could not obtain the slightest concession; and, on weighing the difficulty of maintaining by force such an advanced and detached position, they closed with the proposal of giving it up in exchange for commercial advantages. It was stipulated that periodical caravans should proceed to Pe-king, and reside there for the time necessary to dispose of their goods. This privilege, however, in consequence of the real or alleged misconduct of the Russian traders, was afterwards withdrawn, and the commerce limited to the frontier-stations of Kiachta and Maimatchin.

Kang-hi, venerable in years and wisdom, died in 1722. He was succeeded by Yong-tching, whom even the missionaries, notwithstanding their just cause to consider him an enemy, candidly admit to have acted, in general, the part of an excellent prince. His tender concern for his people, his exer-

tions to relieve them during a period of famine, and to prevent its recurrence by the formation of granaries, draw forth their warmest panegyric. He seems to have entertained a bigoted attachment to the early institutions of China and the maxims of her ancient sages ; considering it a blot even on the greatness of Kang-hi to have admitted so many innovations. Antique usages, fallen into long desuetude, were revived ; particularly the festivals in honour of virtue ; the observances of filial piety ; and the honour rendered to agriculture by the emperor, who once in the year held the plough with his own hand. These sentiments led him to the most rigorous exclusion of every thing foreign, and particularly of the new faith preached by the Jesuits ; and the persecution which, before the death of his predecessor, had sensibly abated, was renewed under him with greater violence than ever.

Yong-tching, after a reign of thirteen years, was succeeded in 1736 by Tchien-lung, more commonly called Kien-long, whose prosperous reign came down almost to the present century. He always displayed a mild and intelligent character, not only encouraging literature, but himself producing works not altogether devoid of merit. At first he showed a strong disposition to relax the severities against the Christian priests and their converts ; and it was with reluctance, though urged by the most pressing representations of the mandarins and tribunals, that he sanctioned the renewal of them. Though not inclined to war, nor waging it in person, the exploits of his generals considerably extended the boundaries of the empire. The alliances formed by Kang-hi with the

tribes of Western Tartary required, on some occasions, military aid to confirm them. His expeditions were successful; and the Eluths, the original enemy, having been completely vanquished, dominion was claimed over all the tribes who had paid homage to that powerful nation. In support of this pretension, the Chinese armies advanced into the fertile lands of Little Bucharía, where nothing was able to resist their progress; and they took possession, with small opposition, of its flourishing capitals, Cashgar and Yarcund. Another extensive acquisition was, as it were, thrown into the emperor's hand. The sovereign of Nepaul, in the plenitude of his power, invaded Thibet; and the Grand Lama, hitherto protected by his sacred character, saw a great part of his territory overrun and plundered by that ambitious potentate. In this extremity, he sought and obtained the aid of Kien-long, by whose orders a powerful army entered Thibet, drove the invader before them, and, pursuing him into his own country, compelled him to solicit peace. The British government learned, with surprise and even some degree of alarm, that a Chinese army had passed the summit of the Himmalehs, and was within the frontier of India. No interruption, however, was thus occasioned to the harmony between the two states; but a report which reached Pe-king, that the English were advancing in support of Nepaul, caused a temporary umbrage, and obstructed the success of Lord Macartney's embassy. Kien-long, however, after delivering his august ally, would have deemed it unsuitable to leave him exposed again to similar dangers. A large force was, therefore, stationed in Thibet; and the

commander did not hesitate to annex that territory to the empire, and to appoint officers to exercise the whole civil and military authority; leaving only the spiritual jurisdiction in the hands of the lama. Thus the whole extent of the mountains and elevated table-lands of Central Asia was added to the Chinese dominions, which now extended westward to the great plain watered by the Oxus and the Jaxartes. Indeed, since the recent cession to Britain of Garhawal or Serinagur, her possessions have become, at one point, conterminous with those of China; but the jealous policy of the latter strictly guards against any intercourse which might take place in consequence of this proximity.

Other events, of a less auspicious nature, diversified the life of Kien-long. The Birman empire presented to his ambitious mind a tempting object; and accordingly, to avenge real or pretended injuries, he declared war in 1767, and sent two successive expeditions down the Irrawaddy. Both, however, were baffled; the one by the desultory and harassing warfare of the natives, the other by the disastrous effects of the jungle-fever. He afterwards endeavoured, by supporting the cause of a dethroned prince of Cochin-China, to obtain a footing in that country; but the army which he sent to invade it was surprised, and almost entirely cut to pieces. Two pretenders to his throne appeared in different quarters. One of them, in the province of Shantung, adopting the ensigns of the Ming dynasty, defeated the first troops sent against him, and even assembled 12,000 men; but not having duly improved these advantages, he was overpowered, and terminated his life by suicide. The other was of

Tartar origin, and claimed a relationship to the reigning family ; his pretensions, however, were very speedily suppressed.

This reign was moreover disturbed by two formidable insurrections in the western provinces and the contiguous parts of Tartary. The first was raised, in 1758, in Se-tchuen, by certain tribes sprung from Thibet ; the second among some Tartar hordes attached to the province of Kan-su, who, making a zealous profession of Mohammedanism, had assumed the appellation of White Caps. Both these bodies of rebels being brave, and occupying mountainous districts, were not subdued till after a long conflict and much bloodshed. The troubles in Se-tchuen lasted fourteen years. In 1785, also, a commotion broke out in Formosa ; and some years afterwards a similar tumult took place among the Meao-tse, a rude clan occupying a large portion of the southern chain ; and these have continued with short intervals to the present day. The interior of the empire also began to be agitated by turbulent and discontented sects.*

In 1795, Kien-long having reached his eighty-fifth anniversary, and reigned during the Chinese cycle of sixty years, abdicated in favour of his fifth son, and died three years after. The new prince, named Kea-king, is described as having been naturally of a good disposition ; but he soon sunk into indolent and luxurious habits, which lowered his character in the eyes of his subjects. He attended business in the morning ; then spent a long time in the company of actors ; after which he drank im-

* Gutzlaff's History of China, vol. ii, p. 53-66.

moderately, when he retired to the apartment of his women.* He was accused also of attaching himself to unworthy favourites,—a charge which the observations of Lord Amherst tend to corroborate. The spirit of disaffection, which had begun to appear under his predecessor, now assumed a more serious aspect. The empire was no longer disturbed, as in ancient times, by the ambition of governors; but there had arisen among the people themselves brotherhoods or associations, who endeavoured to control or subvert the government. The most formidable of these bodies was that which assumed the title of *Pe-lien-kaou*, “The White Water-flower,” or, as it is elsewhere called, “The Law of the White Lotus.” They excited an insurrection in Shan-tung, which spread over three of the neighbouring provinces. Their leader arrogated to himself the lofty designation of San-hwang, which is explained, “King of Heaven, of Earth, and of Men;” and, under him, they maintained their ground eight years, when at length they were suppressed by troops called in from Tartary. The *Tien-le*, or “Votaries of Celestial Reason,” occasioned also no small alarm. Seventy of them broke into the palace, kept possession of a part of it several days, and were not repulsed but by the greatest efforts. The emperor’s son and nephew killed three of them with their own hands.† From these clubs are said to have sprung the Triad Society, the members of which, like freemasons, recognise each other by se-

* Asiatic Journal, vol. v. p. 263.

† Thoms’ Translations of Pe-king Gazettes (Canton, 1815).

cret symbols, though they are understood to have been organized chiefly for purposes of plunder.*

Under this reign, also, a systematic piracy sprung up, and gradually increased till it assumed a most formidable character. The principal retreats were the ports of Tonquin and certain harbours in the islands of Hai-nan and Formosa; but accessions were occasionally derived from the merchants of Amoy and even of Canton. The force of the corsairs was at one time estimated, though probably too high, at 70,000 men, navigating 800 large and 1000 small vessels. Ching-yih, their leader, was drowned; but his widow, with a spirit truly Amazonian, took the command, leading on the fleets to battle, and administering affairs with the greatest vigour. She even promulgated a code of laws, by which these fierce rovers were controlled and obliged to observe the rules of equity towards each other. She imposed a regular tax on the merchant-shipping, on payment of which she granted passes, and without these no vessel could safely navigate the Chinese Seas. The imperial navy was repeatedly beaten off in attacking these marauders, who, when worsted, speedily repaired their losses; and it seems impossible to say how long they might have stood their ground had not disunion arisen among them. A party was formed, hostile to that of the warlike widow; the factions even waged war with each other; and at length the malecontents deserted, and were received into the imperial service. The others then began to despair, and opened a negotiation, which after many difficulties was brought

* Milne on the Triad Society, Trans. Asiat. Soc. vol. i. p. 240.

to a successful issue; the leaders being appointed to naval commands, and the crews admitted to serve as mariners.*

On the 2d September 1820, Kea-king died; and, though a contest for the succession between two of his sons was at first apprehended, the claims of Taou-kwang were peaceably acknowledged. This prince assumed the name of Yuen-hwuy, under which, however, he seems scarcely to be known among Europeans. He is, on the whole, favourably spoken of; and, during his reign, the central provinces have been tolerably tranquil, though in all the remoter districts very serious insurrections have occasionally arisen. The most alarming were those which agitated the western tracts of Little Bucharía, annexed to the empire under his grandfather; and, according to the imperfect accounts which have appeared in the journals, the chief seats of disturbance were Cashgar, Ele, and Yarcund. In the last of these places, the rebels possessed at one time two cities, and nearly 8000 horse and foot;† and at another period they invested the great towns of Cashgar and Ying-keshaur. Even after the rebellion appeared to be crushed, by the capture of Chang-ki-hur, its leader, his son and brother-in-law once more raised the standard of insurrection at Ele.‡ The violence of a governor, who banished the merchants and interdicted the export of tea and rhubarb, is said to have first given rise to this commotion. After a contest of several years, however, it is now understood to be finally suppressed.§

* Gutzlaff's History of China, vol. ii. p. 70-76.

† Asiatic Journal, vol. vi. p. 132.

‡ Ibid. vol. v. pp. 28, 137.

§ Ibid. vol. vii. pp. 33, 97.

The insubordination of the southern mountaineers, which had disturbed the reign of Kien-long, broke out with renewed violence; prevailing chiefly among a fierce tribe called Yaou-jin, or Dog-men, who inhabit the elevated range which separates Quang-tung from Hou-nan. At one time it seemed very formidable; the commander having taken the title of sovereign, and threatened to march upon Peking.* It appears in the end, however, to have been very suddenly repressed by the loss of the chief, who was put to death. But it is alleged by some, that submission was mainly effected by the distribution of money; and it is even added, that the rude natives still continue their predatory inroads.†

In Formosa, too, an island containing a great extent of beautiful and fertile territory, and much improved by Chinese colonists, the former discontent, which probably had never been fully subdued, again assumed an alarming aspect. This rising, it is said, also originated in the oppression of the cultivators; and it spread so rapidly that the rebels were soon in possession of the capital.‡ In other parts, also, it continued to rage for a considerable time; and it was only by disunion among the chiefs, and, as is insinuated, by lavish donations, that, in July 1833, its suppression was at length effected.§

Thus the troubles which for some time agitated the different parts of the Chinese empire, are for the present brought to a close, or at least suspended. Their recent prevalence, however, to so great an ex-

* Asiatic Journal, vol. x. pp. 33, 108.

† Chinese Repository, March 1833.

‡ Asiatic Journal, vol. xi. p. 74.

§ Chinese Repository, January 1834.

tent, indicates a decline of that energy by which the Mantchoo dynasty, under its early sovereigns, and particularly under Kang-hi, was so remarkably distinguished. But whether these be only the first symptoms of a gradual decay, or whether they portend a more speedy downfall, is a question which, with our imperfect information, we have not the means of deciding.

CHAPTER IV.

Knowledge of the Ancients respecting China.

China unknown to the early Greeks and Romans—Lights derived from the Expedition of Alexander—Thinë—Eratosthenes—Periplus of the Erythræan Sea—Marinus and Ptolemy—Great Caravan-route across Asia to Serica—Proofs that this Country was China—Maritime Route—Course traced from the Ganges to Canton—Errors of Ptolemy—Reported Roman Embassies—Silk imported from China—Proofs that Tea was known to the Ancients—Porcelain.

CHINA, to the early Greeks and Romans, may be said to have been an unknown country. She had made considerable progress in the arts of civilisation, and the classic era of her sages and legislators was already passed, when the former people were only beginning to emerge from barbarism. The great men who flourished during the most memorable age of Grecian wisdom were wholly ignorant that such an empire existed. An extraordinary interest, however, was felt when, across the vast expanse of intervening land and sea, faint intimations respecting it began to penetrate. These notices became more distinct, when Rome, in the plenitude of her power, had opened a wider intercourse with the distant quarters of the globe. Then the land of silk, the country of the Seres and the Sinæ, the dwellers in the remotest east, became objects of curiosity second only to the mysterious shores and rivers of Africa. All

the accounts, however, which, at that imperfect stage of commerce and navigation, could be obtained of a kingdom approachable only by travelling over the loftiest mountains, or by winding along dangerous coasts, were necessarily tinged with error and fable. To unravel their complexities, and even in many instances to ascertain what really were the regions described, has exercised the ingenuity of some of the most learned men of modern times, among whom Vossius, Vincent, and Gosselin, have been conspicuous. A short review of discussions which have excited so much attention may not be uninteresting to the general reader; nor are we without hopes of being able to throw some additional light on this curious subject.

Herodotus, who first communicated to the Greeks any knowledge respecting the foreign parts of the world, and who read to them at the Olympic games the result of his researches in the capitals of Babylon and Egypt, does not appear to have received the most remote intimation that such a country as China existed. His acquaintance with Eastern Asia terminated with the Persian empire; and of India he scarcely knew any portion beyond that western tract, watered by the Indus and its tributaries, over which the dominion of Darius extended.

The expedition of Alexander, when that great conqueror penetrated across the Indus, made a remarkable addition to the geographical science of the Greeks. They learned that, beyond the provinces described by Herodotus, there were extensive and more fertile lands, watered by the mighty Ganges, and bordering on great seas that lay farther to the eastward. But all the regions beyond India were

involved in a darkness, through which there was only shadowed forth one great object, the city of Thinaë, supposed to be situated on or near the vast ocean which bounded Asia. From this time Thinaë became a mysterious name in the ancient world. The most exaggerated rumours appear to have been circulated in regard to its splendour; it was represented as being enclosed by brazen walls; and as containing other wonders, which Ptolemy, however, denounces as fabulous.*

Eratosthenes, the learned keeper of the library at Alexandria under the Ptolemies, was the first who endeavoured to form a general system of cosmography; for which purpose it cannot be doubted that he had at his command all the materials collected during Alexander's expedition. His works have perished; but Gosselin has succeeded in giving from Strabo and other writers a very complete view of his scheme, showing its extreme imperfection, so far as relates to the outline of Eastern Asia. He appears to have conceived that the coast, after passing Cape Comorin, stretched directly north, with only a small declination towards the east. About 1000 miles north, and a very little east from the mouth of the Ganges, he places the city of Thinaë, respecting which, however, neither he nor Strabo attempt to communicate any information.

The *Periplus* of the Erythræan Sea was published at Alexandria, probably in the first century of the Christian era, when the merchants of that capital had opened a regular intercourse with the western parts of India. This work forms a coasting guide as far as Nelkunda in Malabar; and the author un-

* Lib. vii. cap. iii.

questionably obtained a tolerably accurate account of the more distant shores as far as the Ganges, beyond which he scarcely recognises any maritime object, except a golden isle, which was probably Sumatra or Borneo. He seems, however, to have made much inquiry, and to have obtained a variety of notices respecting Thinë; describing it as a great inland city, the approach to which was extremely difficult. There were two routes; the one by caravans, which, coming through Tartary by Bactria, brought to Baroach in Guzerat the produce of China; the other was by the Ganges, and thence by sea to Limyrica, in Malabar. He appears to have been unacquainted with any access by water, and gives, on the whole, the following singular account of its position:—"The place is situated under the Lesser Bear, and is reported to border on the opposite parts of Pontus and of the Caspian, by which the Palus Mæotis, not far distant, flows into the ocean."*

The error here, though certainly very great, will appear less strange, if we consider that it was probably founded upon the system of Eratosthenes, according to which the coast of Asia extended almost due north from the mouth of the Ganges. But this writer possessed information respecting the length and difficulty of the voyage, which satisfied him that Thinë was much more distant than the other had represented. The idea, however, being still retained, that the position must be north from the estuary of the river just named, the consequence followed,

* *Periplus Maris Erythræi*, ap. Hudson, *Geogr. Vet. Scriptores Græci Minores* (4 vols 8vo, Oxon., 1698-1717), vol. i. p. 36. Vincent, *Ancient Navigation* (2 vols 4to, London, 1800-1806), vol. i. pp. 476, 477.

that it would reach very far in that direction. Hence it was placed even on the northern coast of Asia, supposed according to this theory to lie in a latitude greatly lower than the real one, insomuch that the hyperborean ocean was imagined to communicate by a strait with the Caspian Sea.*

On the full establishment of the Roman empire, the intercourse with the remote regions of the East was greatly extended. These countries were explored, less indeed for the promotion of science, than with a view to obtain commodities, for which a demand had been created by the boundless wealth and luxury of the imperial capital. Silk, a splendid fabric, then almost peculiar to China, and formerly unknown in the West, was introduced; and, from the attraction of novelty, was prized beyond any other dress in the fashionable circles. The high prices readily given for it kindled the avidity of the merchants, who, in despite of every obstacle presented by mountains, deserts, and oceans, sought to penetrate into the lands which yielded this precious manufacture. As geographical knowledge, however, did not then excite the interest which it merited, our accounts of the tracks which they pursued, and of the scenes which they witnessed, are exceedingly imperfect. The only individual who seems to have bestowed any pains in collecting in-

* There seem scarcely sufficient grounds to determine the precise city to which this celebrated name was attached; and perhaps it presented to the ancients only a vague idea of the metropolis of the Chinese empire. Mr Arrowsmith (*Ancient Geography*, p. 665), has suggested Si-ngan-fou, in Shen-see; but that city does not seem to answer to the extraordinary magnitude ascribed to Thinæ, which besides, by Eratosthenes, the Periplus, and Ptolemy, is always mentioned as either upon or not far from the remotest known ocean. There can, therefore, we think, be no doubt that Thinæ was one of the great eastern capitals.

formation upon the subject, was a Tyrian geographer named Marinus. His work has unfortunately perished; but his materials, though somewhat altered, have been skilfully employed by Ptolemy in forming his system of geography. These writers distinctly intimate two lines, by which travellers might penetrate to the remotest parts of Asia; one by land, and the other by sea.

The great caravan-route across Asia is described* as commencing at Byzantium. The adventurers, proceeding thence almost due eastward, crossed the Euphrates near Hierapolis (Bumbouch), and passed successively through Ecbatana (Hamadan), the ancient Persian capital, and Hecatompylos (Damghan), the metropolis of Parthia. Here they made a circuit in order to touch at Hyrcania (Hurkan or Jorjan), whence they travelled direct to Aria (Herat), and thence to Bactra (Balkh), a celebrated city, long the grand emporium of commerce in that quarter. Their journey, which had hitherto led through level and civilized regions, assumed now a very different character; and they began to ascend those mighty mountains which enclose Central Asia. A path, first north and then south, ascending and winding through a deep valley, led them to the Stone Tower; an object situated at the point where the stupendous chain of Imaus (Himmaleh), after passing westward along the frontier of India, turns to the north, forming the great transverse range to which the moderns have given the name of Beloor or Bolor. The position of this Tower has been identified by Major Wilford, on Tartar information, with a lofty erection, called Chihel Sutun, or the Forty Co-

* Ptolemæi Geographia, lib. i. cap. xii.

lums, still found, though in a somewhat dilapidated condition, in 41° north latitude, on the route of the caravans from Bokhara to China.* But this station, in our imperfect knowledge of Upper Asia, cannot be fixed with precision; though it is stated that from it a journey of seven months, through rugged paths beset with perils and difficulties, led the caravan into Serica, where they found the precious commodity of which they were in quest. Respecting this interesting part of their course, no details, unfortunately, have been communicated, except what may be derived from the map and tables of Ptolemy. Several of the most learned among modern geographers have even produced elaborate arguments, to prove that Serica, after all, was not China. The point, we confess, appears to us almost as clear as it did to Vossius; according to whom, he who doubts it, may doubt as well whether the sun which shone then be the same sun that shines now. After stating the grounds of this belief, we shall be prepared to consider the reasonings by which the contrary opinion has been supported.

Serica was distinguished by the ancients as the country of silk; and it was to procure that fine manufacture that so long a journey was undertaken. It was called the Seric garment (*Serica vestis*), and *Seres*, the name of the people, was, oddly enough, made to signify also silkworms. Now China, by the earliest modern accounts, was equally distinguished for this fabric and its material; to obtain which, previous to the absorbing magnitude of the tea-trade, was the main object of the settlements formed by

* Heeren, *Asiatic Nations* (8vo, Oxford, 1833), vol. iii. p. 389.

Europeans in the *celestial empire*. It is true, that the art of rearing the insect and fabricating the cloth was long ago transported to Europe, where it is now carried to great perfection ; yet while silk in other countries is only on state-occasions the dress of the opulent, in China it still continues to be the general clothing of a great proportion of the people. The character of the Seres, too, as concisely drawn by Ammianus Marcellinus,* corresponds exactly with that of the modern Chinese. They are represented as studiously shunning intercourse with other nations, allowing traffic only at a frontier station, and under very strict precautions ; and while they sell their own commodities, they accept in return nothing but money. They are described also as singularly frugal, quiet, and tranquil ; finally, as unwarlike and averse to the use of arms. These are the characteristics of the Chinese, and directly opposite to those which distinguish the other nations in the east of Asia. The journey of seven months from the mountain-girdle of India was amply sufficient to enable the caravan to reach the borders, and even the interior of China ; while, for any nearer point, the time consumed would be most unaccountable. The extent of Serica, also, as given by Ptolemy, and the two great rivers flowing through it from west to east, exactly agree with the best modern delineations of the empire.

Notwithstanding these proofs, there are other opinions on the subject, which have been held by geographers of the highest eminence. The most remarkable is that of Gossellin, who, with mis-

* Lib. xxiii. cap. vi. p. 300, edit. Ernesti, 8vo, Lips. 1773.

applied learning and ingenuity, has endeavoured to prove that Serinagur, in the north of India, is the *Serica* of Ptolemy,—an hypothesis to which Malte Brun did not hesitate to accede. It is now, however, scarcely deserving of a serious remark, being entirely founded on the imperfect and erroneous notions which prevailed before the expeditions of Webb, Moorcroft, and other English travellers, had made us better acquainted with this region. Till then the Ganges was supposed to have its origin and early course in Thibet; while Serinagur was imagined to be either situated in that country, or easily accessible from it. But it is now ascertained that the Himmaleh, in the loftiest and steepest part of its range, separates the two territories; so that the latter could only have been reached through deep ravines, and by narrow footpaths along the brink of tremendous precipices. Had the ancient merchants penetrated to it, they would have found a territory poor in the extreme; so rugged as scarcely to afford space on which a town could be built; and producing neither silk nor any other commodity by which Roman luxury could be gratified.

Another position less remote than China has been fixed for the *Seres*, by D'Anville, one of the most illustrious of modern geographers, who has, in this opinion, been followed by Pinkerton. These writers place *Serica* in the region to which Europeans have given the name of Little Bucharía, lying immediately to the east of the transverse chain of mountains, and comprising Khoten, Cashgar, Hami, and some other states, which surpass the rest of Tartary in culture and civilisation. D'Anville points particularly at the country of the Uighurs or Ey-

ghurs, whose name is mentioned by the early travellers; and Turfan, their capital, is still described as flourishing. But, notwithstanding the great names by which this hypothesis is supported, it cannot, we apprehend, stand against the positive statements of Marinus and Ptolemy. In the reports made to the former, it was expressly asserted, that the journey from the Stone Tower to the frontier of Serica occupied a period of seven months; so that, while he reckons the grand route across Asia from the passage of the Euphrates to the said tower at 26,000 stadia, he estimates the distance from the last point to the capital of Serica at 36,000 (3600 miles). But when the caravan had reached the tower, they had passed, or at least they had ascended, the Beloor or Northern Imaus, were already on the frontier of Little Bucharía, and could not be more than 600 or 700 miles from the most easterly of its provinces. Making every allowance for exaggeration, and for the obstacles to be encountered, it seems inconceivable that any thing approaching to seven months could have been spent in such a journey, or that it should have suggested a distance of between 3000 and 4000 miles. Even Ptolemy, who rigorously criticises and reduces the too large estimates of his predecessor, allows for the interval between the Stone Tower and Serica 24,000 stadia, amounting to 2400 miles.* It seems incredible that, after penetrating so far, the merchants should not have heard of China, and should believe Little Bucharía the most remote country of the East. Its aspect and character accord as ill with the features which the ancients ascribe to

* Lib. i. cap. xii.

Serica. As to manufactures, some slight silken fabrics might, perhaps, have been found there, but of a very inferior description, and on too small a scale to give to it any claim to rank as the country of silk. Again, although the people of this region might be somewhat more polished than the great body of the Tartar nation, the character of the Seres, as quiet, pacific, industrious, timid, and jealous of foreigners, so applicable to the Chinese, could never with any propriety have been applied to the Bucharrians. On the whole, then, though it may be difficult to identify the details and the names, disguised as they are by passing through the mouths of strangers, all the main points of the description seem to indicate in the most decided manner the identity of the ancient Serica with the modern China.

It remains to consider the maritime course by which the ancients reached the eastern shores of Asia. We have already observed, that the *Periplus* of the Erythræan Sea was drawn up from the information of merchants who did not penetrate beyond the ports of Malabar. There they obtained a pretty distinct delineation of the coast, as far as the mouth of the Ganges, but all beyond was wrapt in obscurity. Only two grand objects, as already noticed, were faintly descried amid the darkness; on the one side, the city of Thinaë, remote and magnificent, but in a position strangely misplaced; on the other, a golden isle, which rumour described as being stored with the most precious productions, and which was probably a vague compound of Sumatra and Borneo, and perhaps of the whole oriental archipelago.

Ptolemy, from causes already referred to, connected with the extent of the Roman empire and

the wealth of its capital, was enabled to delineate those eastern shores of Asia, respecting which only vague reports had reached his predecessors. His tables and maps present a range of coast extending upwards of 3000 miles. It stretches first south-east, from the mouth of the Ganges, in the real direction of the Bay of Bengal ; then, after forming a considerable bay, the Sinus Sabaracus, it spreads into a long peninsula called the Golden Chersonese ; afterwards, receding to the northward, it sweeps into a very deep gulf denominated the Magnus Sinus, on the other side of which the coast assumes a due southerly direction for nearly 1000 miles, facing the west, and terminating in the great seaport of Cattigara.* At some distance inland is placed Thinæ, capital of the nation of the Sinæ. The early moderns doubted not that Cattigara was Canton, and Sinæ the Chinese. But D'Anville, who set the example of restricting the limits of the geographical knowledge possessed by the ancients, concluded that this line of navigation did not extend beyond the meridian of Cambodia. Gossellin, preceded by Vossius, insisted that the land on which Cattigara is placed, being one which stretched far to the south and faced the west, could by no possibility be any other than the western shore of Malacca.† Dr Vincent, although he has collected numerous passages which appear to identify the Sinæ with the Chinese, and though all his partialities are in favour of a more extended course, declares himself unable to resist so striking a fact, and accedes to the doctrine that the knowledge of the ancients at this era did not go beyond the western coast of Malacca.‡

* Lib. vii. cap. ii. *Tabula Asiæ*, xi.

† Gossellin, *Géographie des Grecs* (4to, Paris, 1790), p. 138-142.

‡ Vincent, vol. ii. p. 508.

We confess that the evidences in favour of this opinion appeared to ourselves for a long time irresistible, and had received our fullest assent. But having been led, while collecting materials for this work, to look narrowly into the text of Ptolemy, we think we can show a distinct delineation of a voyage from the Ganges to China, in which Cattigara appears plainly to be Canton. It must be premised, that the most valuable part of this author's knowledge respecting the remote quarters of the world, is contained in those chapters of his first book where he gives the intelligence collected by his predecessor, and on which he himself founds his descriptions. Here we have the statements, not, as in the tables, modified so as to unite into a whole, and often to support a theory, but directly as they were taken down by Marinus from the mouths of travellers and seamen. In the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters, the following outline is given as the information thus collected respecting the voyage from the Ganges to the remotest station of Cattigara :*

“ The Gangetic bay he (Marinus) fixes at 19,000 stadia ; but the navigation of those who go from Paluræ to Sadamantha at 13,000, as if to *the south-east* ; the rest of the voyage from Sada to Tamala he makes 3500, as if to *the north-east*. Then follows the crossing of the sea to a peninsula called the Golden Chersonese, 1600 stadia, again as if to the *north-east*. Marinus does not give the number of stadia from the Golden Chersonese to Cattigara, but he relates that the coast thence was *contrary to south*, and the navigators came in twenty days to Zabæ, and from Zabæ, sailing to the *south*

* Lib. i. cap. xiii. xiv.

and more to the *left* (by which he understands east), they came in *some* days to Cattigara." Ptolemy, however, complains that "Marinus exaggerates the number of days, understanding *some* to mean *many*, saying, that from their multitude they could not be numbered, which appears to me ridiculous; for what number of days can be infinite, even if they were employed in traversing the whole earth, or what should have prevented Alexander from saying *many* instead of *some*."

On the first glance at this voyage, it appears that a course, of which at least half is in a north and north-eastern direction, can by no possibility be that from the Gangetic bay to the western coast of Malacca, which, with very short intervals, is entirely south-east. It is evident that the first part of the course, which alone follows that direction, must have reached to the extremity of the Malayan peninsula, and Sada must be near the situation of Singapore. The next stage is said to be north-east. This is the only statement that is not quite correct,—the eastern shore of Malacca stretching north, and even somewhat north-west; yet it undoubtedly is the coast here described. This is fixed in the most precise manner by the next step,—“the crossing of the sea;” for it is here that, in order to avoid an immense *detour*, the navigator must have steered through the broad opening of the Gulf of Siam. This crossing of the sea brings him to the Golden Chersonese, which is thus fixed in the coast of Cambodia; and, however foreign this is to the ideas of modern geographers, it is in fact the nearest continental point to Borneo, which best merits the early appellation of the Golden Isle. The route from the Golden Cher-

sonese to Zabæ. was "contrary to south,"—that is, due north,—and this, with some winding, is decidedly the line of the coast of Cochin-China and Tonquin; while the period of twenty days' sail corresponds well to its extent, which is large, and involves a considerable circuit. The direction then changed, and the voyage from Zabæ to the final station of Cattigara was "south and more east." This is quite descriptive of the course from the frontier of Tonquin to Canton, where the navigator would at first be obliged to proceed somewhat to the southward; but the greater part of the run would be easterly. From this chain of successive distances and directions, there cannot, we think, be a doubt, that the navigation round Eastern India to Canton is here delineated. Whether it was actually performed by any Grecian mariner is nowhere stated; but the supposition of its having been achieved seems favoured by the circumstance, that the information respecting the remotest shores was given to Marinus by a person bearing the name of Alexander.

Finding Ptolemy in possession of such accurate knowledge, it is truly surprising to observe, that in his tables, and in the maps formed from them, he has widely departed from it, and fallen into the grossest errors. It seems particularly strange, that after having censured Marinus for amplifying so remarkably the last stage of the voyage to Cattigara, he himself should do the very same in a greater degree; while, instead of making it chiefly east, according to his own statement, he has carried it altogether south, giving to the coast of China a direction resembling that of the western shore of the Malayan peninsula. If, however, we narrowly examine Ptole-

my's views, we shall find him to have been misled by certain theories which he had adopted respecting the eastern boundaries of the earth. Having determined on good grounds to reduce the dimensions assigned by Marinus, he attempted to do so with a precision of which the subject by no means admitted. The other having fixed fifteen hours, or 225° of longitude, as the entire length of the known world, Ptolemy formed the arbitrary determination of reducing it to twelve hours, or 180° . The influence of this motive is expressly acknowledged in the reasoning at the end of his fourteenth chapter, where, considering Thinae as the remotest city of which any intelligence had been obtained, he places it, on that sole ground, in the longitude of 180° E. But had his itineraries, which after all his reductions were still exaggerated, been followed in extending eastward the last part of the voyage, they would have carried him considerably beyond this imaginary limit. He determined, therefore, to sacrifice the testimony of the navigators to his theory, and protracted this line of coast entirely south. This fell in also with another favourite hypothesis. While Eratosthenes represented the earth as every where girdled by a circumambient ocean, Ptolemy had resolved to terminate it on every side by unknown land. This he effected, by carrying round from Cattigara to Præsum (Cape Delgado), on the eastern coast of Africa, a great continent, to which the indistinct rumours, respecting Borneo, Madagascar, and other large islands, were probably referred.* We are obliged to confess, however, that it is not in regard to the extreme limits

* Lib. vii. cap. iii.

only that Ptolemy, or his editors, have corrupted the valuable information which he received from Marinus. A general alteration has been made, with the obvious view of converting the Golden Chersonese into the Malayan peninsula (identified by the position Malaycolon and the adjoining Coast of the Pirates), and of placing beyond it "the great bay," evidently suggested by the Gulf of Siam; while the Chinese shore has been confounded with the eastern border of that gulf; which accordingly receives the great river Daona (Donnai), and presents other objects belonging to the coast of Cambodia and Cochin-China. Thus, all the positions on this line have been altered and confounded. It seems doubtful, however, how far these errors are imputable to Ptolemy himself; for M. Gossellin has clearly shown that the original text, here as in other places, has been greatly vitiated.

The knowledge which the Romans possessed of this region is farther proved by the remarkable statement, which M. de Guignes has discovered in a Chinese historical work, that, in 166, A. D., an embassy arrived from An-thun (Antoninus) to the emperor Yau-hi (which must have been another name for Han-houon-ti, who reigned till 168, A. D.). The envoys are said to have come by sea; and, indeed, if we might believe Florus, a mission had before this time been sent from China to Rome. In illustrating the universal awe and veneration in which her power was held under Augustus, he asserts, that even from the remotest nations, the Seres and the Indians, ambassadors came with presents of elephants, gems, and pearls; and that this event was speedily followed by the celebrated shutting of

the temple of Janus.* Considering, however, the vast distance, and how completely opposite such a step was to the diplomatic system of the celestial empire, this boast can scarcely be regarded as any thing more than a rhetorical exaggeration.

This may be the proper place for introducing some notice of the rich commodities obtained in Serica, and which rendered its name so celebrated. Of these, silk, as already noticed, was by much the most important. It appears to have been first known at Rome during the extended dominion of the Cæsars; and its introduction formed an era in the annals of fashion and luxury. The "Serica vestis" was for some time completely the rage in that capital, and is said to have sold for its weight in gold. I cannot, however, help suspecting that silk and the fine Bengal muslins, having been introduced at the same period and from the same quarter, were occasionally confounded together. The descriptions of the oriental tissue as a perfectly transparent robe, and the reproaches of the satirists against the fair leaders of fashion in Rome, as arraying themselves in "woven wind" and "a texture of cloud," which covered the person without concealing it,† seem suggested by the exquisitely-fine fabrics of Bengal, not the substantial silks of China. The report for some time prevalent, that silk, like cotton, grew upon trees,‡ was probably connected with such erroneous conceptions. These could not, however, prevail among the merchants; and we accordingly find the

* Lib. iv. cap. xii.

† Kobierzyckius de luxu Romanorum, ap. Grævii Thesaur. Antiq. Rom. (12 vols fol.) vol. viii. p. 1316.

‡ Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxiii. cap. vi. p. 300. Virgil, Georg. ii. 121.

author of the *Periplus* describing the Gangetic muslins under the appellation of Sindones. In the course of the second and third centuries, the substance became more common and better understood; the knowledge was received, that it was produced by insects; and this was fully confirmed in the sixth century, in the reign of Justinian, when these animals themselves were naturalized in Europe.

The fragrant leaf called malabathrum is another celebrated article produced in China, of the traffic in which a pretty full though somewhat confused account is given by the author of the *Periplus*. Vossius, Vincent, and every other writer, so far as I know, who have treated the subject, hold for certain that it must have been the betel-leaf which, as a masticatory, is of such universal use in the East. It appears to me, however, that this opinion is manifestly erroneous, and that the favourite shrub is unquestionably *tea*. As it is curious to find an ancient account of the traffic in this commodity, we may be indulged in stating the grounds of the decision now mentioned. It will be necessary to begin with a literal translation of the passage in the *Periplus*, as that of Dr Vincent is paraphrastic, and accommodated to his preconceived ideas:—

“ But there use to come yearly to the frontier of the Sinæ, a certain people called Sesatæ, with a short body, broad forehead, flat noses, and of a wild aspect. They come with their wives and children, bearing large mats full of leaves resembling those of the vine. When they have arrived on the frontier of the country of the Sinæ, they stop and spend a few days in festivity, using the mats for lying upon; they then return to the abode of their coun-

Trymen in the interior. The Sinae next repair to the place and take up the articles which they left, and having drawn out the stalks and fibres, they nicely double the leaves, make them into a circular shape, and thrust into them the fibres of the reeds. Thus three kinds of malabathrum are formed; that from the larger leaf is called hadrosphærum; that from the middling one, mesosphærum; that from the smaller, microsphærum."

The most prominent feature here is, that the malabathrum, like tea, is a product of China, and if there were any doubt on this subject, it would be removed by the picture of the broad visage and flat nose of the persons concerned in the trade; and that it is exported thence to India. But the former country, though not wholly destitute of the betel, does not fully supply itself, but *imports* it largely from the nations around. This import, however, consists of the betel or areca *nut*, described by Mr Crawford as the most important part of this favourite composition, and which is not even mentioned in the above description of the malabathrum. We can state from the most positive information, as well as from the silence of all writers who mention the leaf, that it is always used fresh; and indeed, as the favourite mode of using it is to wrap it round the nut, it is obvious that, in a dried state, it would be altogether unfit for the purpose. It appears from repeated statements in Dr Buchanan Hamilton's account of the agriculture of Mysore, that when the nuts are to be sent away, the flavour of the leaves is communicated to them by boiling in the same vessel. The sorting of them, too, according to their different qualities, as here described, so

characteristic of tea, is never mentioned, so far as I know, in the case of betel. But if any doubt remained, it would be removed by the final processes of picking, drawing out the fibres, twisting and rolling the leaves; operations quite applicable to tea, but which would completely unfit the betel for its destined purpose of being wrapped round the areca-nut. Dr Vincent admits, as to his hypothesis, "Why the betel-leaf should be carried in this form from Arracan to China, in order to be made up with the areca-nut, and then returned to India by the Chinese, under the denomination of malabathrum, is difficult to comprehend;" and afterwards adds, "The whole seems to be in irremediable confusion, with particulars founded on truth, and a total that is inconsistent." Now these mysteries and inconsistencies, which he so frankly acknowledges, belong entirely to his own hypothesis; but on the supposition of the malabathrum being tea, every thing is distinct and consistent, considering the writer's imperfect means of observation. The only particular which at first view seems not exactly to agree with modern practice, is the assertion that the tea is not produced in the empire, but brought to the Chinese merchants by independent tribes. But this in fact is stated by Du Halde and the missionaries to be still the case in regard to the tea of Yun-nan, a valuable and important species, which continues to be furnished by fierce mountaineers, who yield a very slight submission to the imperial government. It appears also, that the trade was conducted by the parties under very strict and jealous precautions, though not quite in the suspicious manner described by the author of the *Periplus*.

Another commodity, equally celebrated in antiquity, has had a Chinese origin ascribed to it. This consists of the *vasa murrhina*, "murrhine cups," adorned and painted with various colours, which, when fine, brought the most extravagant prices. These vessels are supposed, by Dr Vincent and other learned writers, to be the Chinese porcelain. It is true, they are clearly described as being composed of precious stone; yet it appears that fire had been employed in their preparation: they are even said by Propertius to have been *Parthis cocta focis*, "baked in Parthian furnaces;" and the manufacturers of Diospolis had succeeded in imitating them. It would have been very agreeable, after tracing so distinctly the silk and the tea of China, to have found also its porcelain. It does not appear, however, that this conclusion can be borne out by ancient records. While the two first articles are always mentioned as the production of the country of the Seres and the Sinæ, nothing occurs to connect the *vasa murrhina* with that remote extremity of Asia. Parthia and Carmania are the countries especially mentioned. They are enumerated by the author of the *Periplus* among the commodities procured in the western ports of India, but not at all in the eastern, nor at the mouth of the Ganges, where, if brought from China, they ought chiefly to have been found. If any channel had existed for their transportation, it seems unaccountable how, even when of moderate size, they should have borne such enormous prices. Probably the land-route, over rugged and mountainous tracts, by which the trade of China was then mostly conducted, may have been considered unfit

for the conveyance of so delicate a fabric. There is only one commodity noticed in modern times which bears any analogy to the *vasa murrhina*; this is the richly-veined marble, which Goez, the Jesuit missionary, found in Khoten in 1603; and of which it is mentioned that, from its extreme hardness, the application of fire is necessary before it can be worked, or even drawn from the quarry. It has not indeed constituted an article of modern commerce and luxury; yet Goez found it, when formed into vessels, bearing a very high price in that part of Asia. It would be met with by the great caravans on their way from Bactria to the frontier of China; by whom it might be introduced into Rome, at a time when every object of ornament and splendour was so eagerly coveted.

CHAPTER V.

Knowledge of China during the Middle Ages.

Rise of the Mohammedan Power—Two Arab Travellers visit China in the Ninth Century—Their Observations—Edrisi and Abulfeda—Marco Polo—First Journey of the Poli—They undertake a Second, accompanied by Marco—Return to Venice—How the Narrative was written—Its Authority—Polo's Description of China—Government of Kublai Khan—Religious Sects—Pomp of his Court—Kambalu—Imperial Huntings—Journey through the Western Provinces—Thibet—Yun-nan—Ava and Bangala—Yang-tcheou-fou—Nan-king—Kin-sai, its Extent and Splendour—Embarkation for Europe—Ibn Batuta visits some Parts of China—His Observations.

As the Roman empire declined, the lights of science by which its brilliant era had been illumined were gradually dimmed. They burned still, though more faintly, in its eastern capital ; but they were with difficulty maintained amid surrounding barbarism, and no effort was made to extend and diffuse them. Knowledge and enterprise became the portion of another people. The followers of Mohammed, taught to propagate their delusive faith with the sword, began by extending the dominion of ignorance over mankind ; and their first conquests were marked by a decided hostility to learning. But during the short and splendid era, when Haroun and Almamoun reigned at Bagdad, and the Saracen sway extended from the Jaxartes to the Ebro, the Mussulman states formed the most enlightened part

of the world, then generally sunk in intellectual darkness. They made great exertions for the improvement of astronomy and geography ; and, by applying celestial observations to the latter science, placed it on a more solid basis. Their energies were particularly directed to commerce. In the Arabian Nights, which exhibit a faithful picture of the manners of that age, the importance of traffic, and the vast wealth often acquired by it, are clearly indicated. The merchants of Bassora went much beyond the range of Egyptian navigation, and opened the most active connexions with all the ports round the Indian Ocean. Even at the end of the fourteenth century, the Portuguese navigators found Arabs, or, as they called them, Moors, in every emporium carrying on trade. They formed a regular communication with China ; so that Canton, where jealous alarm had not yet been awakened, contained in the ninth century a large body of Mohammedan inhabitants. To this intercourse we are indebted for the first authentic account of China, presented in the reports of two Arab merchants, who travelled thither in the century just specified, and which have been translated, with learned illustrations, by Renaudot. The narrative commences with a description of the course from Bassora to Canton ; of which we shall only observe, that the Andaman Islands, and Sumatra, under the name of Ramni, are distinctly mentioned. On approaching their destination, it was necessary that the vessels should pass through what were termed the Gates of China, evidently that cluster of rocky islets called the Ladrões. They then arrived at Canfu (Canton), which appears to have been at that early period the exclusive seat of the

Chinese commerce with the nations of the West. They found, as already stated, that it had contained a large population of Moslem, amounting, with Jews, Christians, and Parsees, to 120,000 ; who were all put to the sword, in 877, by a rebel chief. They are said to have been ruled by a Mohammedan judge, to have lived unmolested, and without any ground of complaint.

The description given by these travellers of the Chinese empire and people is too exact and characteristic to leave any doubt of its being the result of actual observation. The country is represented as extensive, fruitful, and populous, without any deserts ; while India is said to contain some of great extent. It is added, that the inhabitants live on rice, and are well clothed in silk ; for the production of which the mulberry-tree is reared with the greatest care. Tea is distinctly mentioned, under the term *tcha*, as the leaf of a bushy shrub, which, infused in hot water, was reckoned a cure for every disease. Porcelain is described as a ware made of an excellent kind of earth, and declared, though with some error, to be as fine and transparent as glass. The construction of the houses with light wood, and especially with cane ; the extensive trade in salt, and its monopoly by government ; the scarcity of wine, and the substitution of a spirit made from rice, are all characteristic circumstances. We may subjoin, the general diffusion of the knowledge of reading, and the use in all important transactions of written in preference to spoken language ; the strictness of the police, and cruel severity of the punishments ; the rigid surveillance over individuals ; “ for every body in China, whether a native, an Arab, or any other

foreigner, is obliged to declare all he knows of him — self; nor can he possibly be excused from so doing." Yet, amid so many statements which are strikingly correct, it is not without wonder that we find a few which are grossly and manifestly fabulous. Such is the assertion of Ebn Wahab, that the emperor, in estimating the greatness of different monarchs, placed the King of the Arabs at the head, ranking himself only second; a sentiment, we are firmly convinced, which never was uttered by a Chinese monarch, and the use of which by this author can only be considered as a piece of gross flattery to the caliph. Still more are we astonished at finding it maintained, that bodies of executed criminals were publicly eaten; that human flesh was openly exposed in the markets; and that whole tribes, who had rebelled and been vanquished, were devoured by the victors. That a practice so decidedly savage could have then prevailed in China we cannot possibly believe; nor can we even conjecture any thing likely to give rise to so strange a narrative.

The author describes the country as having been much agitated by internal commotion, which it really was during the latter years of the Tang dynasty, when he must have visited it. The residence of the monarch was at Cumdan, described as a very splendid city, which Renaudot supposes to be Nanking; but we doubt whether it may not rather have been Kai-fong-fou, which, previous to the Tartar conquest, was the usual abode of the sovereign.

Edrisi and Abulfeda, the most eminent Arabian geographers, who wrote, the former in the 12th, the latter in the 14th century, do not give so satisfac-

tory an account, and seem not even to have been aware of the existence of the narrative just quoted. Abulfeda says, "China is on the west bounded by the desert, which divides it from the Indus; on the south by the sea, as also on the east; on the north, by the countries of Gog and Magog, and others of which we know nothing. Geographers, it is true, have given the names of many places and rivers in China; but as we are ignorant of the pronunciation as well as of the real state of the country, they are to us as it were unknown; the rather, as we have no one who has been there, of whom to inform ourselves." Edrisi's information is not quite so defective. *Sin* appears repeatedly in his delineation, though without any distinct conception, either of its magnitude or peculiar character. He is, however, aware, that the northern parts had by that time been conquered by a Tartar nation, whom he calls the Bagharghar Turks. The details are both scanty and obscure; especially being separated from each other by the practice of dividing the world longitudinally into climates, among several of which *Sin* is distributed, occupying their most eastern section. *Kecha* seems evidently to be *Kesho*, the capital of Cochin-China. We cannot agree with Renaudot in reproaching this writer as having taken all his information from the two travellers; on the contrary, he appears to have been ignorant that they had left any record on the subject. The names *Sinia Sinarum*, *Caitaghora*, and others, evidently borrowed from Ptolemy, manifest the sources from which his details have in a great measure been drawn.*

* *Geographia Nubiensis*, 10th part of 2d climate, 9th and 10th of 3d climate, pp. 69-144-5 (4to, Paris, 1619).

So far as regards modern Europe, the discovery of China is almost entirely due to Marco Polo, the most illustrious of all the early travellers. Venice, of which he was a noble citizen, was so circumstanced as to have her attention peculiarly attracted towards the remotest empires of the East. It was from them she drew those rich spices, those splendid and beautiful productions of the loom, which formed the chief means of her commercial greatness. In prosecution of this traffic, she maintained factories in all the ports of the Levant and the Black Sea ; she even ruled over extensive islands and districts in that quarter. It was to the East, therefore, that a Venetian, animated with the spirit of enterprise and a zeal for discovery, was most likely to direct his steps. Two brothers of the family of Polo, Nicolo and Maffio, undertook a joint expedition, in the pursuit of wealth rather than of knowledge. They set out from Constantinople in the year 1254, and, crossing to the eastern shore of the Black Sea, came to the court of a Tartar chief, where they found an opportunity to dispose advantageously of a valuable assortment of goods. A war, however, broke out in those turbulent regions, and the prince with whom they dwelt being defeated, their return to Europe was intercepted. They endeavoured to reach it by a circuitous route, which led them round the head of the Caspian, across the Jaxartes, and through the desert of Karak in the country of the Uzbek Tartars, till they arrived at Bokhara. They remained there three years, and had obtained a complete acquaintance with the native language, when an ambassador from a western monarch, on his way to the court of the Great Khan, arrived at the

same spot, and by high offers induced the brothers to accompany him. The mighty sovereign received them well, and showed the usual curiosity respecting distant countries, and a desire of receiving from them missions and embassies. The Pope being named as the most august personage in the Western World, the Great Khan determined on employing them as his envoys to his holiness, to whom he transmitted a request that he would send him a hundred priests, for the purpose, as is asserted, of instructing his learned men in the Christian religion. He presented them with his signet, by the aid of which they prosecuted their journey across Asia, and arrived at Acre in April 1269. On their return to Venice, they found Marco, the son of Nicolo, an accomplished individual, newly arrived at manhood. They took him with them, having, after some delay, obtained from the Pope letters, valuable presents, and two friars. They landed at 'Giazza (Ayas), a port in the Lesser Armenia ; but as war was then raging in those parts, the friars became alarmed and returned home. The Venetians, more enterprising, penetrated, not without great difficulty, across Asia, spending three years in their journey, but reaching at last the court of the Khan. They were received in the same friendly manner as before, and were employed several years in various commands and appointments. At length, availing themselves of favourable circumstances, they made their way, partly by sea, back to Europe, and arrived safely in their native city in the year 1295. They found themselves forgotten by their fellow-citizens, and almost by their nearest relations ; and it was with difficulty, and by singular contrivances, that they

brought themselves to recollection, and took their wonted place in society. The two brothers being now advanced in life, Marco was the most conspicuous character, and the young noblemen of Venice crowded eagerly around him to listen to the tale of his adventures; for, as no press yet existed to communicate such intelligence, he contented himself with making his journeys a subject of conversation. A few months after his return, he had the misfortune to be carried prisoner with Dandolo to Genoa, which, in consequence of this event, had the advantage of procuring a permanent record of his travels. The Genoese nobles not only listened with the deepest interest to his descriptions, but prevailed upon him before his departure to allow a narrative to be drawn up from his notes and dictation. It was first written in Italian, afterwards translated into Latin, and then abridged; and it had undergone these and other changes before it was regularly printed. The first editions were, therefore, undoubtedly defective, particularly in the arrangement; yet, considering the attention paid by Ramusio to procure a faithful copy for his valuable collection, and the care which was employed on the illustrated edition of Mr Marsden, there does not seem reason to suppose that the text has been extensively vitiated. The fame of Marco, however, suffered a long and deep eclipse. His fate was like that of other great travellers at the same epoch, who returned alone from distant regions without any guarantee for their fidelity; and an age which listened with credulity to the most absurd legends, applied a rash and severe criticism to every record of real events, which was beyond the circle of their

ordinary experience. His authority accordingly stood for some time so low, that his very name became expressive of a tendency to romantic fiction ; and a character, meant to expose such rodomontade, was actually introduced on the stage telling the most extravagant and palpable lies. As soon, however, as other adventurers had penetrated into those eastern regions, it was found that his descriptions were given with a degree of accuracy which, at that early period, could only have been attained by personal observation ; and the more fully the East has become known, the higher has risen the reputation of this great patriarch of modern discovery.

China, under the names of Kataia and Manji, the former denoting the northern and the latter the southern part of the empire, afforded the subject of the most striking part of his narrative. It was this portion of his work which excited the greatest wonder and interest in Europe, where the facts contained in it were entirely new ; but it was also the most exposed to the shafts of incredulity. To us, however, who can compare his description with that presented in its own authentic history, and in the accounts of the most trustworthy travellers who have since visited that distant land, this is the part which most fully establishes his fidelity. We possess now, indeed, more detailed and recent information ; yet it cannot be uninteresting to follow this distinguished discoverer in his progress through the empire, which at that time presented some peculiar features which have not fallen under the notice of the moderns.

China was then, as at present, almost entirely subject to the Tartar yoke ; yet it bore still, as al-

ready observed, the traces of its having been long divided into two kingdoms, the northern and the southern. The former contained the residence of the Great Khan, Kublai (Houpilai), the descendant of the conquering Zingis ; and this was the part most thoroughly subdued by him. The throne of the south had also been subverted ; but that region never was completely incorporated into the Mongol dominion.

The account given by Marco Polo of Kublai Khan, his court, capital, and government, very closely coincides with the reports made by recent travellers, containing, however, as we have just remarked, some particulars characteristic of the situation of China at that period. The dynasty of the prince who held the reins of government did not belong to the neighbouring Mantchoo tribe, but to the conquering race of the Mongols, the same who under Zingis, in the commencement of the thirteenth century, had overrun nearly the whole of Asia and part of Europe ; their power reaching from the Eastern Ocean to the frontier of Germany. That overgrown empire had now been severed into large fragments ; and Kublai, in possessing China, held the richest and most valuable portion. He swayed the sceptre with wisdom and lenity ; yet he had not, like the present dynasty, adopted entire the Chinese maxims and institutions, but introduced largely that system of law which Zingis and his successors had framed in order to hold their vast possessions in subjection. The leading principle of the religious and political creed at Kam-balú, as it was found by Rubruquis at Karakorum in 1254, was the simple and sublime truth of the existence of a supreme over-ruling deity, who had committed to the Great Khan the entire dominion of the

earth ; so that all nations were bound to submit to his authority. Resistance was, therefore, denounced as an act, not of treason only, but of the most flagrant impiety ; and against all who were guilty of it an exterminating warfare was waged. On the honorary tablets presented to his captains was inscribed, " By the strength and power of the great God, and by the grace which he hath given to our empire, let the name of the Great Khan be blessed, and let all die and be destroyed who will not obey him." The reverence paid to the sovereign was that of adoration rather than of homage : all who were introduced into his presence, on a signal given, bent down their heads, and beat them repeatedly against the ground. But there appears not to have prevailed that jealous exclusion of strangers which so strongly marks the present policy of the empire. Large bodies of Jews, Saracens, and Nestorian Christians, fought in the armies of Kublai, and were settled in the capital. The emperor courted these different professors, and, notwithstanding their hostility to each other, kept them attached to his person. He expressed himself reverently in regard to their various modes of worship, and besought the prayers of all. He even privately hinted to the Nestorians, and perhaps to the other sects, that but for some peculiar circumstances he might himself have embraced their faith. Nayan, a competitor for the sovereignty, having many Christians in his army, had, in 1286, openly set up the standard of the cross ; and when he was vanquished, the hostile sects endeavoured to bring them into disgrace ; but Kublai repressed these attacks with the prudent remark, that their deity, though invoked by Nayan, had been too

good to favour a rebel, who had therefore called in vain for his aid. The religion of the great body of the people, however, evidently appears, from the large monasteries in which the priests were assembled, their hempen garments, shaven heads, and belief in the doctrine of transmigration, to have been that of Fo, the Indian Boodh. Though generally persecuted by the native governments, it was fully tolerated, and even favoured by Kublai. There was also a numerous body of astrologers, seemingly connected with the priests, who pretended not only to foretell the future, but to perform wonderful feats of magic,—among others, that of filling the emperor's goblet without any visible hand; for all which the author, who lived in an age by no means sceptical upon such subjects, gives them full credit.

The pomp of the imperial court, as described by this traveller, appears to have been nearly the same as in modern times. The two greatest displays of magnificence were made at the emperor's birthday, and at the opening of the new year, in the month of February. Then Kublai not only appeared in his most gorgeous robes, attended by all his princes, generals, and officers, seated according to their respective ranks; but the tributary sovereigns, or those who sought his favour, sent embassies with costly presents, which were presented in state. At the royal banquets, the most distinguished guests were seated, as now, each at a separate table; but the author, seized with an ill-timed love of brevity, declines mentioning either the nature of the dishes or the manner in which they were served up; otherwise we could have compared these with similar arrangements at the present day.

Kambalu, the principal city, a corruption of Khan-

balig (the capital of the khan), is said to have been, in ancient times, eminently magnificent. It appears to be the modern Pe-king. From caprice or the prediction of the astrologers, it had been removed from one side of the river to the other ; the new city being called Tai-du (the great court). The dimensions which Polo assigned to the latter, as comprehending a square, each side of which was six miles long, are not extravagant, nor widely different from those allowed by Le Comte. The streets are described, as by other travellers, to be long, spacious, extending in a straight line from one extremity to the other, and bordered by highly-ornamented edifices ; though he omits to mention that these were shops, and only one story high. He delineates, in elevated terms, the circuit of the walls, and the twelve lofty gates, over each of which, he says, a palace was built ; but, according to modern observation, these structures are mere towers, and more distinguished by height and vastness than by art or elegance. He mentions, also, with a little exaggeration, the vast extent of the imperial palace, as enclosed like a large city, first by an outer, and then by an inner wall, six miles square ; as containing spacious halls, ornamented with representations of dragons, battles, and great public events ; the roofs richly gilded, and adorned with brilliant colours ; storehouses and apartments for the emperor's wives and their attendants, his officers, and all the appendages of his court, almost innumerable. Particular notice is taken of that remarkable feature, the extensive gardens, or rather pleasure-grounds, diversified with trees and meadows, and stored with various descriptions of game. Northward from the palace was an artificial eminence, called the Green Moun-

tain, about a mile in circuit, and 100 paces high. It was entirely covered with rare and beautiful trees, which had been taken up by the roots, and transported on elephants from the remotest countries to which the emperor had access. The space out of which the earth had been dug was formed into two lakes, stored with a great variety of fish. Hunting, the favourite recreation of the Tartars, appears to have held a prominent place in the arrangements of this court; the emperor spending at Kambalu the months of December, January, and February; during which time, stags, bears, and wild animals of every description, were sent by the governors of the different provinces. These, it is asserted, were hunted by lions, leopards, and lynxes, tamed and trained for the purpose; though, by the description, the term lion appears to have been applied to the tiger. In March, the sovereign moved to a territory on the shore of the Eastern Sea, abounding with feathered game, which had been carefully preserved during the rest of the year. The amusement of falconry was pursued during the month on a most extensive scale; being said to employ no less than 20,000 attendants, who, dispersing in different directions, brought down pheasants, cranes, and other birds, in vast numbers, and laid them at the feet of the khan, who was seated in a rich tent borne by elephants. He was accustomed to pass the months of June, July, and August, at Shandu, the modern Shang-tou, a city in Chinese Tartary, about ten days' journey north-east from Kambalu. Here he had built a beautiful palace, surrounded by an extensive park and pleasure-grounds, in which he kept a stud of 10,000 snow-white horses.

No information is given as to where the khan dwelt, or how he employed himself, during the remaining five months ; whether he returned to Kambalu, or visited other parts of the empire.

The administration of Kublai is described, conformably to Chinese history, as altogether despotic, yet in a great degree mild and beneficent. He is said to have been accustomed to make inquiry whether any of the provinces had been laid waste by tempests, locusts, or other calamities ; and, in that event, to have remitted the tribute, and even to have sent a supply of grain from the imperial granaries ; while, in times of scarcity, he disposed of the corn for money, selling it at a fourth of its usual rate. The arrangements for the conveyance of intelligence are said to have been very remarkable. Handsome, and even magnificent inns were built at the distance of every twenty-five or thirty miles, and large relays of horses maintained at each for the conveyance of messengers or ambassadors. The whole number of such stations is said to have amounted to 10,000, having 400,000 horses attached to them. In consequence of these facilities of communication, letters, and even fruits and other luxuries, were conveyed in two days over an extent of country which usually required ten. These establishments are Mongolian, and suited to a conquering power ; they are nearly the same which Clavijo, the Spanish ambassador, in 1406, observed on his way to the capital of Timur ; and even in modern times, when water-communications have a good deal superseded every other, they are still maintained on an extensive, though not on so vast a scale.

Marco Polo appears to have undertaken a most extensive journey to the south-west, as far as the

beautiful plains, partly amid regions finely diversified with mountains and valleys; the whole territory was populous, fertile in corn and rice; silk was largely produced and manufactured; and the ruder tracts abounded with wild animals, which afforded the sports of the chase. At the extremity of this fine district, and on the borders of Manji, or Southern China, is Sin-din-fu (Tching-tou-fou, capital of Se-tchuen), extolled as a large and noble city, twenty miles in circuit, and the former residence of mighty monarchs, but now included in the wide domain of the Great Khan. Numerous rivers of various magnitude traverse the surrounding country; these afterwards unite to swell the grand stream of the Kian (Yang-tse-kiang), which rolls 100 days' journey eastwards, till it discharges itself into the sea.

After leaving Sin-din-fu, and passing through a beautiful and populous plain, Marco entered a very different tract of land. This was Thebeth (Thibet), under which name a considerable portion of the region commonly called Tangout appears included. He passed southward along its eastern border,—a line in which his steps have not been followed by any modern European with whom his narrative can be compared. This district included neither Lassa, Teshoo-Lomboo, nor any of the shrines in which the pomp of the spiritual kingdom of the Lama is displayed. Instead of those wide and naked plains observed by travellers in India, the country is described as overgrown to a great extent with gigantic canes; and the abundance of the animal which produces musk is almost the only circumstance whence we can recognise this locality. The people were evidently very rude, and having probably opposed an obstinate resistance to Tartar invasion, had

suffered severely in the contest. Practices peculiarly barbarous and licentious are imputed to them, respecting which, however, Polo may perhaps have listened too readily to reports from unfriendly quarters.

After completing this journey through Thibet, he entered Kain-du, which is evidently the north-western part of the province of Yun-nan, and afterwards its capital, Yung-ning-tou. Proceeding southward, he crossed the Yang-tse-kiang, which he calls Brius ; he then made his way to Karaian, by which he still plainly designates the north-western part of Yun-nan ; and Yachi, mentioned as the chief town, appears to be Tali-fou. He next came to Karazan and Kardandan, which are within the limits of Yun-nan, and form its most western portion. His description of this remote section of China, marked by bolder features than the rest of the empire, is perhaps the best we yet possess. It appears to present a mixture of the rich culture of the interior with the rude features of its border lands. The production of musk, and the fine horses with their tails carefully docked, seem to identify it with Thibet ; but the abundance of rice marks it as a Chinese province. Gold in large quantities is said to be found in the beds of many of the rivers, so that its value in relation to silver is only as one to six. A lake is mentioned in which are numerous pearls, and a mountain containing a mine of turquoises. Rich spices, ginger, cinnamon, and even cloves, are said to be produced. One district was infested by a destructive species of alligator. Many tribes appear to be decidedly barbarous ; and have imputed to them superstitious, dissolute, and fantastic practices, to which, we may presume, implicit credit ought not to be attached.

South of this territory, Marco learned the existence of a great united kingdom,—Mien (Ava) and Bangala. As the tide of Tartar conquest, in 1272, rolled towards them, the sovereign brought into the field a most formidable army. A severe but doubtful conflict ensued. The powerful and well-trained elephants of Ava and Bengal, as they bore down upon the Mongolian squadrons, carried terror along with them ; and the horses, unaccustomed to the view of these huge animals, were struck with a panic and refused to face them. The warriors, however, leaping to the ground, advanced on foot, and pouring in clouds of arrows, wounded their gigantic assailants ; these, being thrown into confusion, took to flight, when the Tartars speedily obtained a signal victory. It is asserted that these fine regions were reduced to complete subjection under the Great Khan ; but the information was obtained at a court where the slightest testimonies of homage, or even of compliment, have always been interpreted as marks of submission. Perhaps the sending of pompous embassies with rich presents to propitiate this potent neighbour, formed the only token of subjection that was ever required. Several other countries,—Kangi-gu, Amu, and Tholoman,—are mentioned, which appear to be parts of the Eastern Peninsula ; but it is difficult, and does not much concern our present object, to determine their precise position.

While the author is employed in describing these southern regions, we find him, very unexpectedly, once more in the vicinity of Kambalu. So confusedly has the narrative been arranged, that this extraordinary transition is made without being announced, and as if he had been passing from one district to an-

other closely contiguous. The reality of this change, however, is clearly proved by Mr Marsden. In fact, the traveller had formerly noticed that the road from Kambalu divided into two branches,—one leading to the westward, which has now been delineated, the other southward to Manji and its celebrated capitals. Of the latter he next proceeds to give an account.

Marco's southern route was in the line now occupied by the Great Canal, and along the course of the rivers by which it is fed ; but that grand communication had not then been completed. Passing by Pa-zan-fu (Ho-kien-fou) and several other large cities, he came to Sin-gui-ma-tu, which appears to be Lin-tsin-tcheou, whence the waters flow in different directions,—on the one side towards Kambalu, on the other to Manji and the great river Kara-moran. Proceeding still southward, he came to Koi-gan-zu, which we agree with Mr Marsden must be Hoaingan-fou,—“a large city,”—the seat of the combined trade of the Hoang-ho and of the rivers from the north. Thence he passed by Tin-gui (Tai-tcheou), about three days' journey from the seacoast, where there is an extensive manufactory of salt, which Sir G. Staunton found to be so prominent an article of Chinese commerce. He then came to Yangui (Yang-tcheou-fou),—“a noble city,”—the residence of one of the twelve “great barons,” or governors, who, under the khan, exercised a subordinate authority over the empire. It is stated that the Venetian, during three years, held here the supreme jurisdiction. The people, it is said, “subsist by trade and manual arts,” for which their situation, at the mouth of the great river Yang-tse-kiang, must have been extremely favourable. His journey

was now continued for a considerable space along the banks of this mighty stream, which he names Kian. The next object is the province and city of Nan-ghin, evidently Nan-king, the former of which he describes as "one of the greatest and noblest of Manji," abounding in corn, and in animals both wild and tame; and the latter as the seat of a great traffic, where cloths of gold and silver are manufactured. It does not, however, appear that he actually visited this magnificent capital, otherwise he would have described it in still more glowing language. Instead of proceeding through it, he seems to have sailed south-east towards the ocean, and passing several large cities, came to Kayn-gui, where he must have left the river and travelled by land, or by a canal, into the southern provinces. In this direction he came to Chan-ghian-fu (Tching-kiang-fou), which is described by him as rich both in natural productions and merchandise; and obtaining a view of Tin-gui-gui (Tchang-tcheou-fou), "a large and handsome city," arrived at Sin-gui, now called Sou-tcheou-fou. That capital, delineated by modern travellers as the gayest and most splendid in the empire, does not seem to have then attained such pre-eminence. It is, however, represented as twenty miles in circuit, extremely populous; containing many rich merchants, ingenious artificers, and eminent physicians, with philosophers and magicians. It had jurisdiction over sixteen others, in many of which flourishing manufactures, especially of silk, were carried on.

From Sin-gui a journey of a few days led the traveller to Kin-sai, which, beyond a doubt, is Hang-tcheou-fou. The former was called "The City

of the Earth," this "The City of Heaven:—" "In the world there is not the like, nor a place in which there are found so many pleasures, that a man would imagine himself in paradise." It was this part of our traveller's narrative which most excited wonder in the West, and brought upon his work the reproach of romance, though the leading features have been sufficiently confirmed by modern observation. Yet Hang-tcheou-fou,—no longer the proud metropolis of Southern China, the seat of its most ancient dynasties,—could not possibly correspond with the description of the Venetian traveller, who saw it in the days of its greatest glory. Then, undoubtedly, it far outshone all that was splendid in the most flourishing cities of Europe. Probably, it even surpassed the modern Chinese capitals, the greatness of which is founded upon the residence of rude Tartar princes. Yet it seems undeniable that this brilliant scene dazzled the eyes of Marco, and was viewed by him through a somewhat exaggerated medium. From this censure, for example, it seems impossible to rescue his statements as to its circuit of 100 miles, its population occupying 1,600,000 houses, and the 12,000 bridges by which its rivers and canals were crossed. It must be recollected, however, that most of these details are given upon the authority of others; so that he incurs the reproach rather of credulity than of fiction. Sir G. Staunton represents Hang-tcheou-fou as being still an immense place, not much inferior in population to Pe-king. The situation, as described by both, is similar; with a large river (the Tsien-tang-kiang) on the one side, and on the other a lake, the beauties of which are painted by the Venetian in the most enchanting

colours. He dilates also on the temples, monasteries, and palaces, with which it was bordered ; the islands, containing spacious edifices for the accommodation of pleasure-parties ; and the gay barges, sumptuously decorated, continually floating on the surface of its waters. The same scene, though considerably shorn of its splendour, still meets the eyes of travellers. In Marco's time, the palace of the fallen dynasty was still visible. It was enclosed by a high wall, ten miles in circuit, containing ranges of gilded and painted galleries, in which, on great occasions, entertainments had been provided for 10,000 guests. Another quarter comprised apartments sufficient for the accommodation of the royal ladies, 1000 in number. But two-thirds of the enclosure, as is usual in Chinese cities, was laid out in groves, lakes, and gardens, pastured by various animals, and provided with every means of recreation. The traveller saw it in a state of complete decay ; the finest apartments had gone to ruin ; the lofty wall had fallen ; and the groves were deserted. The citizens were peaceable, courteous, friendly, but addicted to dissolute pleasure,—effeminate and timid, in consequence of which they became an easy prey to the hardy warriors of the North. The khan had placed in Hang-tcheou-fou a garrison of 30,000 men, under a viceroy whose authority extended to 140 cities.

Marco, in his return, appears to have proceeded through the provinces of Tche-kiang and Fo-kien, embarking at Zai-tun (either Suen-tcheou-fou or Amoy) ; but nothing very remarkable occurs in this part of his route.

It will be proper to mention, that the empire

shortly after (between 1324 and 1353) was visited by the celebrated Ibn Batuta, who did not, however, penetrate deeply into the interior, or communicate much new information. Even the track he followed is not very distinctly traced. He arrived first at Zai-tun, a fine port situated on a large estuary, which the narrative of his predecessor enables us to fix at Amoy or Fou-tcheou-fou, in Fo-kien. Thence, ascending a river, he proceeded to Sin-kilan, a great city with a splendid temple, and which the Chinese told him was distant sixty days' journey from the castle of Gog and Magog. This is a very vague and fabulous indication ; but, as the abode of those mighty giants was always placed in the heart of Tartary, the mention of it seems to intimate, that the place in question was near the frontier of that region. Hence we might have been led to suppose that Peking was meant, had not the communication by a single river precluded that idea : it must therefore, we apprehend, be one of the great cities of Fo-kien or Tche-kiang. Having returned to Zai-tun, another river-expedition conveyed him through Fan-jan-fur and Kan-jura to El Khan-sa, which he describes as the largest city he had ever seen on the face of the earth, divided into six quarters, and the seat of flourishing manufactures. There is nothing to identify this position very precisely ; and Dr Lee's hypothesis, which places it in Shen-see, cannot be for a moment entertained. We have little doubt it is no other than the Kin-sai mentioned above ; from which point the adventurer returned, and embarked at Zai-tun.*

* Travels of Ibn Batuta, translated by Professor Lee of Cambridge (4to, London, 1829), p. 221.

Ibn Batuta found China still subject to a Mongol government, which, however, was not only vigorous but protecting. Travelling was performed with the greatest safety, though under strict regulations. Every night, at the inns, the names were recorded of all the strangers that had come to lodge there, who were then locked up, and allowed to depart in the morning, on being found to correspond with the register. No mention is made of any very rigid exclusion of foreigners ; but the utmost care was taken to prevent natives from leaving the country. Before the captain of any vessel was permitted to set sail, a complete list was taken of his crew, for every one of whom he was made responsible on his return. Batuta gives a correct account of the vast extent of the empire, its rich productions, and crowded population. He particularizes silkworms; which were seen feeding on the trees,—and silken robes were worn even by the lowest ranks, those of cotton being valued at a much higher rate. The case is at present quite reversed ; but it will be afterwards shown that the introduction of cotton is of comparatively recent date, and was only in progress at the period under consideration. He likewise alludes to a paper money which was then in circulation ; adding a tolerably accurate account of the manufacture of porcelain, though, from the places in which it was stated to be made, we may rest assured, it could not be that very fine species which is fabricated only at King-te-tching.*

* Ibn Batuta, pp. 208, 209.

CHAPTER VI.

*Discovery of China by the Portuguese ; Early Missions
by them and the Spaniards.*

Arrival of the Portuguese in India—First Expeditions to China—Peres d'Andrade—Simon d'Andrade—Embassy of Thomé Pires—Settlement at Macao—Spaniards established in the Philippines—Assist the Chinese against the Pirate Li-ma-hon—Mission by the Augustines—Courteous Reception—Description of the Country—Obliged to return—Mission by the Franciscans—Succeed in landing—Treatment by the Mandarins at Canton—By the Viceroy at Tchao-tcheou-fou—Not permitted to remain—Embassy under Ignatius—Severe Treatment—They quit China—Jesuit Missions—St Francis Xavier—Michael Ruggiero—Settlement at Chao-tcheou-fou—Journey into Se-tchuen—Residence at Nan-king—Make their Way to Pe-king—Schaal or Sca-liger—Their Disgrace—Thrown into Prison.

THE distinction of being the first modern people who attempted to open a maritime intercourse with China unquestionably belongs to the Portuguese. They had taken the lead in the career of navigation and discovery, and their grand achievement of passing the Cape of Good Hope conferred upon them an easy access to the whole circuit of the Indian Seas. Under a succession of eminent commanders, and particularly the heroic Albuquerque, they extended their conquests almost to the extremity of Asia. The capture of Malacca, in 1511, brought them near the remotest regions of that continent, previously very little known to Europe. The great commerce, too, then centering in that port, afforded

opportunities of acquiring information, which their leader most actively improved. He not only made diligent inquiries of the natives who touched at Malacca, but prevailed upon the captains of such ships as were destined for the neighbouring countries to take on board one or two intelligent Portuguese, who might make observations and gain intelligence on the spot. Through these channels notice was soon obtained, that China was the greatest, most populous, and also the most wealthy empire of the East. An express mission, under Rafael Perestrello, was sent forward to acquire still more accurate knowledge; though, before his return, Jorge de Brito, who had succeeded as Governor of Malacca, having equipped a squadron of eight vessels, determined to send them to the same quarter. Fernando Peres d'Andrade, to whom he gave the command, set sail on the 12th August 1516; but after passing Sumatra, touching at Patane, Pulo Condore, the Lequios (Loo-choo Islands), and Java, he returned to Malacca.* By that time Perestrello, having completed his mission, confirmed the most flattering accounts of the region he had been sent to survey. Andrade, therefore, again hastened to depart in June 1517, and in August arrived in the road of Canton. He soon found himself surrounded by numerous vessels filled with Chinese, who showed extreme jealousy, and made some hostile demonstrations. A communication, however, was opened by means of Duarte Coelho, another Portuguese officer, who, in returning from Siam, had encountered a large fleet of pirates, by whom he was roughly handled, and obliged to take

* De Barros, Asia, dec. iii. liv. ii. cap. vi. pp. 174, 182, 185; cap. viii. p. 206. 12mo, Lisboa, 1777.

shelter in this harbour. From him Andrade learned that the armament had come out with no hostile intention, but only with the view of strictly watching his movements. No opposition was made to his proceeding to the island of Beniaga (Bankshall), and anchoring in the port of Tamou (Wham-poa). Then, by Coelho's advice, he despatched a messenger to the officer who presided over the port of Canton, stating his desire to be allowed to trade in the harbour, and to send an ambassador from his master the King of Portugal with a view to conclude peace and alliance with the emperor. A friendly answer was received, implying, however, that the determination on these proposals must rest with the Pio, or high-admiral, who resided at Nanto (Nan-ciam), and had the supreme direction of all maritime affairs on this coast. This officer, upon being referred to, sent also a very courteous reply, but stated that nothing could be decided until after consultation with the three governors of the city. Andrade, finding that these references caused intolerable delay, resolved forthwith to enter the port at all hazards. He put his flotilla in motion for this purpose, but encountered a violent storm, which at once defeated his intention and severely shattered his vessels. The Chinese were suspected of viewing this disaster with no small satisfaction, in the hope that the Portuguese, being obliged to remain through the winter, would be compelled to treat with them on their own terms. They withheld, accordingly, all the materials requisite for repairing the ships; but the commodore, by skilfully employing what he had on board, succeeded in soon placing the whole in sailing condition. Then he proceeded to Nan-ciam, where, after much negotia-

tion, he prevailed upon the Pío to grant a license to enter the harbour of Canton, and even pilots to guide him. On reaching that city, he was informed that the three governors, called the Tutam, the Chumpon, and the Cantam, were all absent; but their departure was suspected to have been preconcerted, merely that they might dazzle the strangers by the pomp of their return. This ceremony took place on three successive days, each rising above the other in dignity and grandeur. The river was covered with innumerable boats, on which waved variously-coloured silken flags; and those which streamed over the walls of the city were so large, that they might have served as sails to ships of war. After several communications with these great personages, the Portuguese commander was requested to attend a general meeting, at which they were to deliberate on the subject. He chose rather to send Joannes Impole, his factor, accompanied, however, by a most splendid retinue, to correspond with the taste of the country. The interview passed very amicably, and it was arranged that the ambassador should reside in Canton, and be supplied with every thing, until permission should be obtained for his proceeding to court. Andrade was to return in two years to receive him; and the Portuguese, in the mean time, were to have liberty to trade. He then sailed along the coast as far as Chin-tcheou, where he met several vessels from Loo-choo; and, being much pleased with the people, he would have visited these islands, had not the lateness of the season induced him to steer for Malacca.*

Before his arrival, however, intelligence had been received there from Duarte Coelho of the favourable

* De Barros, dec. iii. liv. ii. cap. viii. p. 207-221.

now opened; and in August 1518, Simon de Lacerda, brother to Peres, was sent with a fresh expedition.* The latter is acknowledged to have been of a pompous disposition, and imbued with that domineering spirit which had been cherished in the Portuguese by a succession of victories,—a character which ill fitted him to treat with so proud and jealous a people. He began by erecting a fortress on the island of Tamou, in defiance of the Chinese, and also a smaller one in the vicinity, in which he announced his intention to incarcerate every individual who should injure his countrymen. Several ships having come from Siam and Cambodia, were by strong measures prevented from receiving a cargo till his vessel had been fully supplied. Such a right, it seems, was often claimed in the East by the first comer; but the violent manner in which it was enforced altogether disgusted the native authorities. The circumstance, however which excited the most deadly resentment, was the number of children who were purchased as slaves. The laws, indeed, grant to parents the cruel right of selling their offspring, and even prescribe a regular formula for the transaction. But under cover of the ready market, and the opportunities of concealment, many children of wealthy parents were stolen, and brought to the Europeans for sale; which gave rise, of course, to loud complaints. Thus dissensions continually increased, till the governor at length determined to proceed to the last extremity, and having fitted out a fleet of fifty sail, he attacked the small squadron of the Portuguese. Duarte Galvão, who had arrived with two additional ships, and taken the command, made a

* Barros, iv. lib. vi. cap. i. p. 2.

gallant defence, repulsing the enemy at first with considerable loss. Finding, however, that he was beset by superior and continually-increasing numbers, in a manner which precluded all hope of finally maintaining his ground, he caused his crew to collect the most valuable of their effects, and by a vigorous effort cut his way through the assailants, and returned to Malacca. All vessels which the Chinese found belonging to the subjects of Portugal, and even several from Patane and Siam, containing individuals of that nation, were seized and plundered.*

Meantime the embassy, after being long delayed, was allowed to proceed towards the capital. At its head was Thomé Pires, who had previously exercised the humble function of an apothecary,—not a very favourable circumstance in such a country; but he is described as a person of much intelligence, activity, and address.† He was conveyed from Canton in a splendid bark, ornamented with silken flags, and shaded by an awning of the same rich material. Having crossed the lofty range that separates Quangtung from Kiang-see, he arrived in four months at Nan-king, of which he transmitted a splendid description. Thence he was ordered to attend the emperor at Pe-king; but, on account of some public disturbances, he was detained there some time without obtaining an audience. At length a demand was made for his letters, which consisted of one from the King of Portugal, one from Andrade, and a third from the Governor of Canton. The two first were couched in the usual style of respect due to sovereign princes; but the persons who were employed to translate them, thinking the contents not duly reverential to

* De Barros, cap. ii. p. 15-22.

† Ibid. liv. ii. cap. viii —

their great monarch, entirely altered their language and tenor. The writers of them were made to state, that the King of the Franks (Europeans) had sent an ambassador to the Son of Heaven and Lord of the world, acknowledging himself his vassal, and requesting the seal which is employed by the kings tributary to the empire. The letter from the governor, though written before any actual hostility, was conceived in very different terms. The Portuguese were there described as an exceedingly powerful people, who had taken Malacca and spread themselves over the Indian Seas, and now sought to establish a factory at Canton. They were represented as persons of the loftiest pretensions, and extremely difficult to satisfy. The strangely-different import of these letters was not a little perplexing to the imperial court. But about the same time others were received from certain officers at the port just named, where the strangers were also stigmatized as violent and dangerous adventurers, who, under pretext of trading, found access into every country, and then sought to obtain possession of it; who had driven out the King of Bintang, a vassal of the emperor, from the Malayan peninsula; and were acting, even in the Chinese dominions, in the most imperious manner. The measures consequent upon this intelligence were delayed by the death of the sovereign; and some time elapsed before his successor found leisure to inquire into the affair. Upon examining the correspondence, he was advised by several counsellors to put Pires to death as a spy; but the prince, judging this step inconsistent with his own honour and the character of an ambassador, sent him to Canton, to be there treated as circumstances might dictate. The envoy reach-

ed that city at a most inauspicious moment, when open war was waging with his countrymen : he was thrown into prison, and soon after died.*

In consequence of these transactions, the Portuguese were for the present most rigorously excluded from the ports and seas of China. The mutual benefits of trade, however, and some assistance which they gave in suppressing piracy, enabled them at length to open a certain degree of intercourse. They obtained a station, first on the island of Sancian (San-tcheou), and then at Macao, where we shall repeatedly find them; and here they were even allowed to erect a fort, which they have ever since retained, though the extensive commerce, with a view to which it was founded, has been long since transferred to other nations.

The Spaniards did not appear in the Indian Seas at so early a period as their neighbours. Treaty and papal donation had assigned to their rivals all the lands that should be discovered to the east of a certain meridian; while the countries to the westward belonged by a similar right to themselves. His holiness had not sufficient knowledge in cosmography to foresee the collision which would arise, when the two claims were prosecuted around the circuit of the globe. In fulfilment of this obligation, however, the Spaniards did not interfere with the Portuguese in their voyages to India by the Cape of Good Hope, nor with the conquests achieved by them in that direction. But they maintained, that whatever regions they might discover, when proceeding westward from America, were within their undisputed domain. Magellan had, in 1520, penetrated the strait

* De Barros, liv. vi. cap. i. p. 2-14; cap. ii. p. 24.

which bears his name, and opened a path across the Pacific; but it was not till 1564, that Velasco, the viceroy of Mexico, fitted out a large armament, under the command of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, with the title of Adelantado, or chief admiral. This officer crossed the ocean in the line traced by his predecessors, and came to the group of fine islands, which, after the Prince-royal of Spain, had, in 1543, been named the Philippines. Having made himself master of Manilla, capital of Luzon, he established a settlement, which soon attained a considerable degree of prosperity. Here a number of merchants from China imported rich and valuable commodities, and described their nation as superior in intelligence and politeness to any other in the East. The Spaniards, according to custom, as soon as they obtained possession of this island, founded three monasteries, of the respective orders of St Augustine, St Francis, and St Dominic; and several Jesuits had volunteered their services. These men, inspired with an ardent zeal to communicate the blessings of the true religion to a great and enlightened people, made earnest application to the Chinese merchants to procure them admittance into their country; but the latter declared that they could not, without incurring the severest penalties, aid them in an attempt directly opposed to the established laws of the empire. The missionaries, therefore, were beginning to lose hope, when an opening was afforded by unexpected circumstances.*

Li-ma-hon was one of the most formidable of those pirates who have at different periods infested the coasts of China, and aspired even to the rank of mari-

* Mendoza, Dell' *Historia della China* (12mo, Venetia, 1590), p. 165-190.

time sovereigns. After the empire had suffered severely by his ravages, the government assembled so great a naval force, that he did not venture to encounter it, but withdrew from the coast. Hoping to indemnify himself by an establishment on the Philippines, he attacked Manilla, and even reduced some part of the town, where he committed the most dreadful cruelties; but when the Spaniards had mustered their strength, they obliged him first to retire, and then take up a defensive position on the banks of a neighbouring river. Here they held him for three months closely invested; and it was not till he was brought to the last extremity, that he effected a skilful retreat, though in a shattered condition.*

During these operations, O-mon-con, the Chinese commander who had been sent out to capture Lima-hon, followed him to Manilla. Many courtesies passed between him and the Spanish authorities; and he was so much pleased by their successful exertions against the common enemy, that on learning the anxious desire of their priests to be allowed to propagate the Gospel in China, he undertook to introduce them. This offer, so much beyond their most sanguine hopes, was eagerly accepted; and a party was formed, consisting of d'Herrada and Marino, Augustine friars, and two officers, Vilorado and Loarca.†

On the 12th June 1575, the mission, after a solemn mass celebrated in the convent of the Augustines, set sail. Their progress was slow, as the Chinese, who had only a rude compass and no regular charts, studiously avoided losing sight of the coast; and their astonishment was extreme on being informed that Legaspi, in sailing from Mexico, had

* Mendoza, p. 168-185.

† Ibid. p. 188-191.

been three months without once seeing land. The sailors, on the admonition of the friars, discontinued the daily sacrifice to their idols, and, instead of them, adored the image of the Virgin and those of the saints; but this seems to have been rather from courtesy than from even any pretext of conversion. At length they arrived at the port of Tansuso (Tong-san) in Fo-kien, and were received by a considerable body of troops drawn up on the shore, where the variously-ornamented ensigns, expressing the rank of the different officers by whom they were borne, gave to the party a gay and imposing appearance. Still they could not land without a written order from the governor; but this they soon obtained, and were most hospitably received. A liberal allowance of provisions was daily furnished, both here and on their way to the capital, at the expense of the provincial government. Officers were appointed to attend them, with orders never to lose sight of them for a moment, but to go wherever they went, and stop wherever they stopped,—a close guard kept up professedly from respect, but, in fact, to watch their movements. The populace showing their usual curiosity to see people of strange costume and feature, a number of soldiers became necessary to secure the doors; yet this did not prevent them from surrounding the house, and mounting upon the walls. The governor, on one occasion, received the mission at a splendid entertainment enlivened by a large band of musical performers.*

After remaining two days at Tansuso, they embarked on a river leading to the city of Chin-tcheou. What they saw during this voyage surpassed every idea which they had formed of the fertility of the

* Mendoza, p. 193-209.



country, and the extent of its population. Every spot of ground was in the highest state of cultivation ; canals were conducted through every field ; rice, the staple production, appeared in all its various stages of planting, sowing, and reaping. Town succeeded town so closely, that the whole appeared like one ; and on asking the names of places containing 3000 or 4000 houses, they were told these were not worth mentioning, and that notice would be given when they reached a city of any importance.* On the 11th July, they arrived at Chin-tcheou, which, though esteemed in China only a very secondary place, was reckoned to contain about 70,000 houses. The approach was across a most magnificent bridge, 800 paces in length, and composed of stones, many of which were twenty-two feet long by five broad.†


* Mendoza, p. 212-218.

† The annexed plate does not exhibit this bridge, nor one on nearly so great a scale. It is taken from a very fine drawing in the Macartney Collection, giving the best representation we have seen of Chinese ornamented bridges ; and it may enable the reader to conceive others of greater magnitude.

The river was so covered with boats and barks that the water could not be seen. The streets made a most splendid appearance, particularly the arcades and flags in front of the shops, the rich wares with which these were stored, and the triumphal arches which were erected at short distances. Although the streets were three times as broad as is usual in Spain, the crowd assembled to see the Castilians pass was so great, that if a handful of corn had been thrown among them, not a grain would have reached the ground ; and their chairs could not be carried along without much delay. No sooner had they reached their lodgings, than notice was given that the Insuanto (Tsong-tou), or viceroy, desired to see them ; and though they needed rest and refreshment, and were very ill equipped for a ceremonious visit, there was no alternative but to comply. They were then led through a still more elegant, and, if possible, more crowded street ; and absolute force was requisite to effect their entry into the palace, which stood in the midst of a beautiful square. They received, however, the mortifying intimation, that on being ushered into the governor's presence, it behoved them forthwith to place themselves on their knees, and remain in that position so long as the conference lasted : if they did not like this attitude, there was no choice but to return as they came. Their pride was not a little shocked by this proposal ; but, after a serious consultation, the friars decided that the important object of their mission was not to be renounced upon such a ground. As soon as the Insuanto saw them before him in the suppliant attitude prescribed, he gave them a very gracious reception, presented them with rich silken

robes, and accepted their excuse of not having had time to prepare a present suitable to his dignity. After a liberal refection, they were conducted to their lodgings, where a guard was appointed to attend them day and night. Next morning, all the great men of the city waited on them in succession, and the manners of these nobles are described as very courteous and agreeable. They were also well entertained at splendid banquets in the Chinese style. Before each of them were placed seven tables, not covered with cloth, but painted, and bearing numerous dishes on silver trays, piled over each other. The principal one was covered with castles, elephants, bulls, and other objects, all of sugar and confectionary, and richly gilded. On the remainder were the more solid articles of beef, pork, fowl, goose, and other dishes, which in all amounted to no fewer than fifty. The two military officers had three tables, others only one; respect being invariably shown by the number of these boards. They were all ranged in a circle, in the centre of which a play was acted; musicians and buffoons completed the entertainment; and the festival, which was judged worthy of a prince, lasted upwards of four hours. At the end of this display, the governor admitted the friars to a more familiar audience. He advised them to proceed to the provincial capital Auchieo (Tchao-tcheou-fou), and wait upon the viceroy, who alone could grant them the privileges solicited. Having readily complied, they had a guard appointed to conduct them and provide every necessary. This journey presented on a greater scale the same objects which had hitherto excited their admiration. In approaching the city now named,

they crossed a broad river, over a stupendous bridge, which they found by measurement to be 1300 paces long, and composed of huge stones like that at Chin-tcheou,—a work which appeared almost miraculous, considering that all around was an open plain, and no mountains in view from which these materials could be obtained. The suburbs, estimated at about two leagues in length, were so populous, so filled with handsome houses and shops, that, had they not been assured to the contrary, they would have taken them for the town itself. The viceroy sent to request them to spend the night without the walls, that preparations might be made for their entering in full pomp. Next day, accordingly, they were received by a numerous train of military, variously and splendidly equipped, and conducted to the gate of the palace, which was thrown open amidst a deafening sound of artillery, drums, and trumpets. Being introduced to his highness, and having without hesitation placed themselves on their knees, they were well received, and desired to rise: he then asked, whether they had brought letters from their sovereign to the Emperor of China. Upon their answering in the negative, he hastily dismissed them, intimating that his decision must depend upon an answer from court, which was then so distant that a considerable time must elapse before it could arrive. Meantime, they were comfortably lodged, amply supplied, and two tablets affixed to the gates, expressing their names and the object of their journey, and threatening the severest punishment to any who should molest them. Two banquets were given, more splendid, and accompanied with more elaborate plays, dances, and other



entertainments, than at Chin-tcheou; notwithstanding which, indications of deep jealousy soon became more and more apparent. The two military officers, being sent with the presents to the viceroy, were not personally admitted; but were informed, that as soon as their gifts should be carefully packed up, and a list of them made out in presence of witnesses, they would be transmitted to court. Soon after, learning that the strangers were walking about the city and observing every thing remarkable, he issued positive orders that they should on no account quit their house; where, indeed, they were treated with even increased liberality, though it had become to them a gloomy prison rather than a residence. They now determined to remonstrate, and with that view went to the palace, and endeavoured to obtain an audience; but this step being altogether contrary to Chinese usage, they were repulsed without much courtesy. They then, with great difficulty, had a written memorial drawn up, and by promises and entreaties prevailed on a captain of the guard to present it. The viceroy gave a verbal reply, referring them to his former statement as to the necessity of an answer from court, and the time which must elapse before its arrival. The Spaniards now became very despondent, and not a little tired of their abode at Auchieo. They had come with the belief, and had always maintained, that Lima-hon was so closely watched near Manilla that he could not possibly escape. A report was spread, however, that the pirate was again ravaging the coasts, and though this proved partly erroneous, he had certainly succeeded in extricating himself from the blockade. A belief, in short, had gained ground,

that the missionaries were mere spies sent to observe the weak parts of the country, with a view to future invasion. The viceroy was understood to have held a council of his principal officers, among whom was the Governor of Chin-tcheou. The result was, that the friars were brought before the council, and formally asked why they had come into China, and what they wanted. They replied in a courtly manner, that their chief object was to form a close alliance between the two nations for their mutual benefit; and here they introduced an account of what their countrymen had done against Li-ma-hon. They added, as if it had been a slight and secondary object, their wish to learn the language of China, and to teach the doctrines of their religion. Being closely interrogated about the freebooter, they declared their firm belief that he must by this time be either killed or taken. The viceroy then announced his desire, that they should return to Manilla till this fact were ascertained; assuring them, that when the pirates should be delivered up, they would receive the utmost favour, and have permission to teach the articles of their faith. They were, however, so tired of their situation, that they now urged a speedy departure; but they were detained for ten days till the arrival of an imperial visiter, who was curious to see them. They were entertained at a parting banquet still more sumptuous than before, and escorted to the coast with the greatest respect and attention. On their way to Manilla, they learned the escape of Li-ma-hon; but at that city accounts were also received that he had died of chagrin, and his followers were dispersed. The Chinese commanders still expressed the most friendly disposition, and advised that an embassy should be sent from the

King of Spain to their sovereign, whose express consent must be obtained before any foreign religion could be taught in his dominions. Such a proposition was accordingly transmitted to Philip.*

The ardour of the Augustines appears to have been cooled by this reception; but soon after there arrived a body of fourteen Franciscans, who were fired with a zeal even surpassing that of their predecessors. The governor, however, influenced by selfish motives, represented that any such attempt would endanger the newly-formed friendship with China, from which great advantages might result; that the treatment of the former mission sufficiently showed what was to be expected; and that the undertaking should at least be postponed till some more favourable opportunity. The friars, seeing no hope of his concurrence, determined to effect their purpose, if possible, by some private means, being willing even, if necessary, to go into the country as slaves. They at length found a captain who engaged for a sum of money to receive them at a neighbouring port, and convey them to the coast; but when they came to the place he returned the money, saying, that, on second thoughts, he was persuaded such a step would cost him his life. They were in despair, till the governor, being about to form a new settlement at Los Hilocos, requested several of them to proceed thither and exercise their functions. There, being freed from his control, they agreed with several of their companions and three soldiers to embark for the empire in the small vessel in which they had sailed. After encountering two severe storms, they saw the land three or four leagues distant;

* Mendoza, p. 221-284.

while the intervening space was covered with such a multitude of barks, that they could scarcely discover the water. But whenever they approached them to gain information, they made off at full speed ; and the crews of three boats which they overtook testified their wonder by laughing loudly to each other. Next morning, therefore, they proceeded alone up the bay ; passing, almost by miracle, through a fleet of eighty guard-ships without being perceived. They then saw several vessels, which had arrived from Chin-tcheou with salt, and on their making signals, the captain of one of them came on board. He was struck with amazement at their speech and dress ; and learning that they were Spaniards, asked under what license they came ; but the instant he heard they had none, he started up, sprung into his boat, crowded all his sails, and pushing to sea, was soon out of sight. His dread was, that if seen in their company, he would have been considered as introducing foreigners into the empire, and have incurred the severe penalties attached to that offence. Trusting to their own resources, the friars entered the mouth of a large river, where a class of small vessels were so numerous and ranged in such order, that they seemed to form a populous city ; but no sooner was their strange aspect discovered, than the natives on all sides fled in such confusion as made it astonishing that no accident occurred. They spent the night, therefore, at a station in the middle of the river, and next day proceeded till they came in sight of a lofty tower and mole, beside which a number of junks were stationed. They waited for some time, expecting to be observed, but seeing that no one took any notice of them, they landed

and fell on their knees in wonder and gratitude to find themselves arrived, without opposition, on a shore which they had been taught to believe so rigidly shut against strangers. Their actions and whole appearance proclaiming them foreigners, excited, as usual, intense curiosity ; multitudes flocked round them ; and they at length entered the city-gate, concealed amid the crowd which they themselves had occasioned. Here, however, their progress was arrested. The guards, inquiring the cause of the tumult, and learning with alarm that strangers had arrived, obliged them, though without violence, to return. Two natives, who understood Portuguese, then exhorted them to go on board their vessel and wait the governor's leave to take up their abode in the city. Accordingly, not long after, an officer borne in a sedan chair held up a tablet, on which was written in large black letters the expected permission to land. They were led before a judge who, though not of the highest order, was seated in great pomp. On his inquiring who they were, what they sought, and how they had found their way, they frankly stated the facts, represented their pious object, urged its extreme importance, and entreated to be allowed to pursue it without molestation. A native Christian, however, who acted as interpreter, consulting his own and their safety rather than truth, gave an entirely different turn to the petition. He stated that they were holy men like the bonzes ; that they had no sort of idea of visiting China ; but that, in sailing from the Philippines to Los Hilocos, they had suffered shipwreck, and the greater part of the crew had been drowned. Having contrived, however, to get into this little bark, without pilot or

mariners, they spread the sails and committed her to chance, which had very unexpectedly wafted them into this unknown port. The mandarin then inquiring what they had in the vessel, was answered, that they had neither arms, money, nor merchandise, but only their books and instruments of worship. He caused these to be brought, and was much pleased with the view of objects so novel,—European printing, Catholic images, and an altar of black stone which shone like a mirror. He asked, however, how these articles had been preserved in such perfect order amid so dreadful a shipwreck, and the interpreter, a good deal embarrassed, could only reply, that objects so much valued had been saved in preference to every other. This was plausible: the judge, followed by another, repaired to the vessel, and caused all its contents to be spread out before them, when, being satisfied that it contained no prohibited articles, he made a favourable report to the governor, and a tablet was soon brought down, containing a formal permission to land.*

The friars now went to the house of the Chinese Christian who had pleaded their cause with so much ingenuity, and celebrated some of the mysteries of their religion; but they waited in vain for the allowance to preach, which he had falsely taught them to expect. Being reduced to distress for want of victuals, they endeavoured to procure a livelihood by begging,—an expedient not unusual among the Romish orders,—and though it was contrary to the laws and practice of the kingdom, they found it productive; but as soon as the governor was informed of their condition, he ordered their ne-

* Mendoza, p. 286-309.

cessities to be liberally supplied from the public funds. The national jealousy, however, began forthwith to operate. The captains of the vessels, through whose remissness they had passed up the river, had their whole property confiscated, were severely beaten, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment. This disposition was fomented by the Portuguese, who represented them as spies come for the worst of purposes; and a prophecy was said to be current, that the empire would be conquered by men with an ample beard, high nose, and large eyes. They were therefore subjected again to a long examination, the result of which was reported to the viceroy at Tchao-tcheou-fou, from whom an order arrived that they, with every thing they possessed, should be brought to that city for his inspection. They cheerfully undertook the journey, because it appeared to open to them an entrance into the interior of the kingdom. They were astonished at the high cultivation of the country, its numerous population, and the close succession of inhabited places; so that they thought the whole should be called, not the kingdom, but the city of China. They were equally struck with the greatness of Tchao-tcheou, its bridge, and its suburbs. The viceroy was found seated in awful state, there being painted on the opposite wall, as an emblem of justice, a dragon vomiting fire. They were edified with the view of fifty notaries, who, having been convicted of extortion, were cruelly punished by blows with a cane. The priests were asked to bring their altar and images, which his highness examined one by one, and with great apparent pleasure. He then referred them to his timpintao, or lieutenant, who was to examine and report on

the subject. Being introduced to this person, and asked the object of their voyage, they candidly stated it to be, liberty to reside in the country and teach their religion. But the interpreter, following the same prudent course as before, repeated his doleful tale of the shipwreck, and their having been driven, contrary to their knowledge and intentions, into the port of Canton: adding, that all they wished was to be allowed to remain two or three months, till the proper season should arrive for sailing to the Philippines. The timpintao replied, that the request was perfectly reasonable, and they might be quite at their ease, as he had no doubt every thing they asked would be granted. This answer being conveyed to them by the interpreter, and understood to apply to their own petition, filled them with the most joyful surprise, as they had never once hoped for success so prompt and complete. They went home and returned fervent thanks to Heaven. After spending some days in the city, and being visited by a number of great men, they were sent to Canton with a letter to the governor. That officer, on perusing it, observed, with a smiling countenance, that they must indeed be favourites of the viceroy, and promised that he would strictly fulfil its injunctions. They were handsomely accommodated at a mansion in the suburbs, which had once been a palace, and they continued for some time full of the most flattering hopes. However, when day after day rolled on, and the imperial deputy not only gave no directions for allowing them to preach or found a monastery, but did not even permit them to leave the house without special license, they began to feel an anxiety which be-

came deeper and deeper. At length, through one of their attendants, they learned the treachery of the interpreter, and that the favour granted to them was, not to abide and sow the seeds of the Gospel in China, but to quit it by the earliest opportunity. In their first grief, they sought some means of retrieving this dreadful error. They endeavoured to find a person who would enter into an explanation with the governor; but neither by promises nor entreaties could any one be induced to undertake such a commission. They deemed it necessary, therefore, to acquiesce in the arrangement; and while some of them with difficulty obtained a reception at Macao, the others, proceeding to Chin-tcheou, embarked for the Philippines, where they arrived on the 2d February 1580.*

None of the missionaries who had once been in China, seem to have felt any inclination to return. But we have already mentioned the suggestion made by the Chinese officers at Manilla, that the King of Spain should send an embassy with presents to his imperial majesty. Philip readily adopted this proposal, and, in 1580, sent out a numerous body, who, inspired with ardent zeal, urged the governor to forward their views. This officer pressed the same objections as formerly to any such undertaking, but could not absolutely prohibit it in the face of such high authority. A party of seven was therefore formed, at the head of whom was Martin Ignatius, with three Spanish soldiers, one Portuguese, and seven natives of Luzon. Having set sail, they steered for the coast, and on the fourth day came in view of it. Through the inexperience

* Mendoza, p. 310-363.

of the pilots, however, they approached, not Canton, but a more northerly and unknown port ; where they had not the same good fortune as their predecessors, to pass unobserved. On the contrary, so soon as they were descried, a crowd of vessels sailed out, and on coming within musket-shot, opened upon them a continued discharge of arquebusses. The unfortunate Spaniards made signs of friendship, and held up their unarmed hands for mercy. They were recognised by a native who had been at the Philippines ; on whose information a party came on board ; and, having found neither arms nor instruments of offence, conveyed the fathers, holding naked swords over their heads, into the neighbouring town. Four of them, when summoned before the admiral, went into his presence with trembling, but were treated more mildly than they expected, being merely ordered to be confined on board their vessel. The investigation of their case, however, was intrusted to a judge, who treated them with such extreme harshness, that they expected every successive summons to be for the purpose of putting them to death. This destiny seemed unavoidable, when one day they were surrounded by a number of boats filled with armed men, and the magistrate, seated in pomp on board one of them, ordered the Spanish bark to be thoroughly searched. The persons employed bore a black ensign, usually displayed in China when the last sentence is to be executed. After the examination they were conveyed on shore to a gloomy tower, destined for the pirates who infested the neighbouring seas ; and whence, as their Indian companions assured them, no one ever came out except to lose his life. Amid all their boasts of am-

bition to attain the crown of martyrdom, so near an approach to it threw them into the most dreadful agitation. Two of the number lost their senses ; one of whom was seized with an illness, of which he died some days after. The admiral, however, having several times examined them, resolved, it was said after casting lots, to send them to the chief judge of maritime affairs, who resided in an adjoining city. The audience-hall of this officer presented a scene at once splendid and terrible. A number of persons were tried and punished on the spot : being stripped naked and bound, the mandarin struck the table with his hand, when the executioners began to beat the calf of the legs so violently with canes, that no one could outlive more than fifty such blows. This was an appalling sight to the Spaniards, who viewed it as an earnest of what awaited themselves ; though, after many rigid investigations, and being kept some days closely confined, it was only determined to ship them off to the viceroy at Canton. They were led down to the sea, for the purpose, as they imagined, of being drowned ; but, a violent storm arising, they were conveyed by land through the cities of Hoi-tcheou and Tchao-tcheou, the greatness and splendour of which inspired the usual astonishment. Having arrived at the place of their destination, they were thrown into a prison among crowds of the lowest malefactors, many of whom they saw carried away to execution ; but Arias Gonsalvo de Miranda, the Portuguese commander at Macao, generously forgetting all national jealousies, exerted himself so strenuously that he obtained their liberation after sentence of death had been passed ; and

they were too happy to quit China and find a refuge in that settlement.*

Of all the monkish orders, the Jesuits have, undoubtedly, done the most for the promulgation of Christianity. Their address, their learning, their knowledge of the world, and an accommodating disposition, carried perhaps to an extreme, enabled them to overcome obstacles which had baffled the less enlightened zeal of other fraternities. St Francis Xavier, decorated with the lofty title of the Apostle of the Indies, was the earliest missionary sent to that part of the globe, and more distinguished, it is said, than some of his successors by a true and evangelical ardour. About the year 1549, he sailed in a Chinese vessel from Malacca, on his way to Japan. The voyage was long and hazardous ; during which he was much afflicted by the sight of an idol placed in the poop, having candles and incense continually burning before it, which, on every emergency, was consulted by the crew, with offerings of meat and birds. Viewing this image as an impersonation of the devil, he felt it most grievous to be so many months under the sole direction of that unholy power. He was afraid of being detained for the winter at Canton, but ultimately effected his voyage to Japan. Having spent forty days in acquiring a knowledge of the language, he had at first some hopes of success ; but he soon found the superstitious people so much prejudiced in favour of their neighbours, that nothing which did not come from China was held in any estimation.

He felt, therefore, that he must begin with that

* Mendoza, p. 368-413.

country, and, returning to Malacca, urged Alvarez, the governor, to send a mission to the emperor (here called king), as the only effectual mode of opening an entrance into the empire. The governor declined this step, without regard to the entreaties and denunciations of the Christian, who then endeavoured to treat with some captain that would land him on any part of the Chinese coast, and leave him to find his own way. He was accordingly conveyed to Sancian, in the vicinity of the Bocca Tigris, where the Portuguese and natives held an annual fair, during which they dwelt in temporary booths. Here Xavier had agreed with a merchant, for a lading of pepper, to put him secretly on shore; but as the time approached, the interpreter forsook him; after which "the merchant also vanished." The zealous divine was soon after attacked with a fever, and died in December 1552. He was buried in this island; but, several months afterwards, his remains were removed to Goa, and re-interred with great honours.*

A few years after, the Portuguese obtained permission to form a settlement on the island of Macao, which soon became the seat of a great trade. From its convenient situation it was chosen by the missionaries as the centre of their operations for China and Japan. These were farther aided by the license, afterwards granted, to hold two annual fairs, each lasting two months, at Canton; though they were obliged to go every night on shipboard, where they were strictly watched. In 1579, Michael Ruggiero, a priest from India, took advantage of this market to visit the city just named; where, by his assiduity in

* Purchas' Pilgrims (London, 1625, folio), part iii. pp. 318, 319.

learning the Chinese language, he so far gained the admiral's favour, that he was permitted to stand while others knelt, and, instead of being required to repair nightly to the ship, was allowed apartments in the palace. He was obliged, indeed, to depart with the rest at the end of the market; but it was soon after contrived, that he should be sent at the head of two successive missions to the viceroy, who resided at Sciauchin (Chao-tcheou). That officer was so delighted with the rich and curious presents brought by the holy brethren, among which were a clock of singular structure and a triangular glass or prism, that he detained them some months, and they were in hopes of being allowed to remain. Unfortunately he was soon after removed; and, dreading the consequence of his successor finding strangers within his jurisdiction, he obliged them to return. Their efforts to obtain another introduction were at first baffled; and they even heard that the new viceroy had issued a proclamation, severely censuring those who had not only received foreigners into the interior, but assisted them to learn the language of the empire. They had, however, left a secret notice, that a large sum would be paid to any person who should procure for them a fresh permission to reside in the country. So powerfully did this operate, that in a short time letters-patent were obtained from the governor, allowing them to come to Chao-tcheou, and even to build a house and church. After some difficulty in raising the promised money, they set out, and in September 1583 reached that city, where they were well received.*

The Jesuits, proceeding on a cautious system, had

* Purchas, pp. 320, 321.

said nothing of their missionary character, nor of any intention to preach the Gospel. They merely represented themselves as holy men from the West, who, attracted by the fame of China, desired to spend the remainder of their days in it, and wished only for a spot of ground on which to erect a temple to the Tien-chew or Lord of Heaven. Having pitched on an agreeable and commodious site, they built two cells with a hall in the centre, where they placed an image of the Virgin. This figure, together with their triangular glass, and their books richly bound and gilded, brought crowds, who, kneeling before the Madonna, struck their forehead against the ground. Scandal, however, being caused by their "worshipping a woman," another image was substituted; and the governor, to do them honour after the Chinese manner, sent two tablets; one inscribed "The house of the flower of divine men," and the other, "The holy nation of the West." The more intelligent visitors viewed with much interest a map of the world hung up in the hall, which they requested to have explained. Their world consisted of their own country, the bordering seas, and a few neighbouring territories, all of which little exceeded one of their provinces. They were, moreover, greatly surprised to see the celestial empire occupying only a nook in the vast circumference of the earth; though their jealousy of Europeans was at the same time lulled by observing the vast distance at which their portion of the globe was situated. Riccio constructed also spheres, sun-dials, with other philosophical apparatus, and explained their use. He thus acquired the reputation of a very great astrologer; so that when the governor was

advanced to a higher dignity, he never doubted that it was entirely owing to the stranger's incantations. The new ruler was equally friendly; and as he was going to court, offered to take some of them as far as his native province of Cequion (Se-tchuen). Considering this as affording means, both for extending their influence and providing against reverses, Ruggiero and Almeida, accordingly, set out in December 1585. As they penetrated into the interior, and came to the main road leading to Nan-king, they were astonished at the succession of vast cities, and the multitudes who thronged the roads; greater, they say, than they had ever seen in Europe when merchants were crowding to a fair. After passing the province of Kiang-see, instead of continuing their journey northward towards Nan-king and Peking, they turned to the west through Hou-quang. Here they found some exceptions to the famed fertility of China, in certain mountainous tracts, where for five days they obtained only a scanty supply of provisions. In the middle of February 1586, they arrived at Ciquion (Koei-tcheou-fou), which they found a fine city, and, from the numerous streams and canals by which it was intersected, bearing a great resemblance to Venice. Their residence was at first very agreeable, but troubles soon arose. A false convert made some persons believe that they possessed the power of converting mercury into silver; on which pretext he obtained from these dupes money to purchase a wife; and they, on finding themselves cheated, vented their resentment upon the Jesuits. These religionists were charged with the most serious crimes, and though perfectly able to clear themselves, became, notwithstanding, the objects of

hatred and suspicion. At Sciauchin, also, they were accused of acting as spies, of decoying away children, and other offences. A memorial was presented to the viceroy, in which the introduction of them into the country was represented as equivalent to having filled the houses with serpents and dragons. He was at length induced to prohibit their longer residence; yet, after they had returned to Canton, he recalled them, and granted them permission to settle in any other city of the empire. They chose Nankian (Nan-yong-fou).

Hence, by the favour of successive dignitaries, they found their way to all the principal capitals, Nanciang (Nan-tchang-fou), Nan-king, and Pe-king; and in this way they saw the great water-communications and the most fertile provinces. They visited even the splendid cities of Sou-tcheou-fou and Hang-tcheou-fou, of which they heard it said,—“That which is in heaven the seat of the blessed, is on earth called Suceu and Hamceu.” They finally fixed their abode in Nan-king,—the greatest, as well as most enlightened city of China. Their scientific knowledge procured for them here great notice and influence. They renounced the costume of bonzes, or holy men,—a class not only despised by the grandees, but even considered as the ministers of vulgar superstition; and they assumed the dress of the learned, from whom the nobles and great officers are chosen. Their attainments in physical science, which in Europe would have been considered very secondary, appeared miraculous in the eyes even of the most accomplished Chinese. The mandarins at the same time seem to have had a degree of good sense, which enabled them to appreciate the philosophical

principles of the missionaries, especially when confirmed by practical applications. They themselves, indeed, had an observatory, with very fine instruments, in which an astronomer was constantly stationed to report every change which took place in the heavens, and the events which it portended. But they firmly believed, that the earth was a level plain, with the heaven rising in an arch above it ; that night was caused by the sun retiring behind the mountain *Siumi* ; and that eclipses took place in consequence of the god Holochan covering the sun with his right hand and the moon with his left. They were exceedingly surprised when they were told that the earth was globular, that its opposite side was inhabited, and that its shadow, intercepting the sun's rays, caused the moon to be eclipsed. Great was their wonder, on being assured that the former of these luminaries was larger than the earth ; but, on its being stated that some of the stars were larger also, their amazement knew no bounds. The courses of the planets, the elevation and depression of the pole, with the consequent change of seasons, and the construction of globes and sun-dials, were all new to them. One great doctor at length exclaimed,—“ You may consider us Tartars and barbarians ; for you begin where we end.”

The favour which the missionaries enjoyed with the mandarins at Nan-king, they sought to improve so as to secure for themselves a reception at court, where they hoped for greater influence and more ample means of diffusing their doctrine. With this view, they provided themselves with clocks and pictures, richly gilded and adorned with numerous dragons ; also with a monochord, mirrors, and other ele-

gant and curious articles. Letters of introduction, and the means of travelling, were supplied by friendly nobles ; and, setting out in May 1600, they easily accomplished their journey to Pe-king.

On their arrival, a eunuch in high office, who had joined them on the road, animated chiefly, as they suspected, by the view of advancing his own credit, gave his majesty an account of the valuable presents which they brought, and requested permission to introduce them ; but, to his great disappointment, the emperor made no reply whatever. This was equivalent to a refusal ; and the missionaries were thus left in a very painful and embarrassing situation. They were not allowed to quit their barge, stationed at the distance of four days' journey from the capital ; and their friend, seeing little honour derived from the connexion, began to treat them with visible coldness. At the end of three months, however, they heard with joy, that the king had expressed some curiosity about the articles in their possession ; and the eunuch got from them, not only a complete list, but the things themselves, that they might be ready for immediate presentation. But his majesty again dropped the subject, and they were in the same distressing state as before ; the evils of which were increased by a foolish apprehension on the part of their intercessor, who, happening to see an image of the Crucifixion, was struck with horror, and suspected it to be a charm to kill the sovereign. Several mandarins, to whom this was communicated, withdrew from all intercourse with them ; the treatment they received became accordingly worse and worse ; and at length they began utterly to despair. On a sudden, however, after two months and a half, the prince chanced

to recollect them, and asked where were the strangers who had brought the images, and the little bells that struck of their own accord (the Chinese description of clocks), and why these things were not brought to him. The utmost despatch was then employed in conveying the friars to Pe-king, which they entered amid the usual concourse of curious spectators. The king viewed with interest the clocks and pictures, though he placed the last in a hall at some distance ; as if, believing them to be alive, he were somewhat afraid of them. The timepieces, however, when he observed their mechanism and effects, greatly delighted him. He sent repeated messages to ask a description of their king's dress, and particularly of his hat ; what sort of palace he inhabited, and how he was buried ; likewise, what and how much the missionaries themselves ate. He considered it beneath his dignity to admit them into his presence, but caused portraits to be taken of them for his inspection. He even offered to create them mandarins, which they prudently declined, having to contend with much jealousy on the part of the great men. They were even shut up in their house three months ; but this dislike they overcame, as at Nan-king, by a display of their skill in astronomy and mathematics. On the death of one of them, named Riccio, in 1610, an offer was made to erect a temple, and place an image of him in it. The goodwill thus produced was not lost even amid those dreadful convulsions by which the reigning dynasty was overthrown, and the empire subjected to the Tartar yoke. Chun-tchi, the first monarch of the new race, viewed with peculiar favour Adam Schaal or Scaliger, the most intelligent of the survivors. He conferred on him the dignity of man-

darin,—the acceptance of which scandalized some of the brethren,—appointed him president of the tribunal of astronomy, and employed him to compile the imperial calendar. The missionaries having converted several members of the emperor's family, entertained at one time some hopes of his becoming the Constantine of China.*

During this long period of favour, the Jesuits enjoyed very considerable opportunities of diffusing their religion, being allowed to practise its worship, and seldom obstructed in the attempt to make proselytes;—yet they do not boast of any very great success. The bonzes, or priests of Fo, indeed, instead of holding the same high place with the Bramins of India, were viewed with contempt by the superior and enlightened class, and were peculiarly derided on account of their artifices to extort money from the people. The idols, though numerous, were by no means held in profound reverence; as the Chinese, who are endowed with a large portion of good sense, perceived without much difficulty the absurdity of the homage paid to them. Even when the missionaries, with a too-forward zeal, seized and dashed these images in pieces, no very deadly offence was taken. But it must be added that, when the Christians attempted to substitute a purer faith, the same indifference was encountered, and proved a most serious obstacle. While all the other oriental nations had some religious impressions, the learned in China made it their boast not to worship any god, either false or true, and

* Purchas, pp. 327-359, 407. Le Comte, *Mémoires sur l'Etat Présent de la Chine* (2 vols 12mo, Amsterdam, 1698), vol. ii. p. 149. Du Halde's *General History of China* (4 vols 8vo, London, 1736), vol. i. p. 482-485.

to take no concern in what should happen after this life. Their veneration was exclusively bestowed on their ancient sages, in whose honour alone they conceived that temples ought to be erected. When to this was added their usual alarm and displeasure at every innovation, the consequence was, that the whole body assumed a hostile attitude to oppose the attempts to introduce a new belief. Among the charges brought against the missionaries, some applying to Christianity itself betray ignorance and prejudice. The assertion that they were disposed to foment rebellion was also unfounded ; and that of their not paying due respect to the emperor, or to parents, arose from the excessive veneration of the Chinese for the supreme ruler as well as for father and mother. The imputation, however, that they were merely great talkers and mountebanks, and by no means so learned as was generally supposed, is admitted by Navarete to have been applicable to some of their number. It was added, that they sought to gain converts rather by the display of European curiosities than by arguments ; and here, too, the missionary seems unable wholly to deny, that "watches, harpsichords, looking-glasses, and tweezers," had involved them in this reproach. These discontents increased till, on a favourable opportunity, they burst forth unrestrained. One of the chief functions of the tribunal of astronomy was to fix an auspicious day for the performance of any great public duty,—a choice which its members were supposed fully qualified to make by viewing the aspect of the heavens. The missionaries, in undertaking such an office, somewhat merited the catastrophe in which it involved them. One of the princes having

died, it was their part to name the most proper day and hour for his interment. They did so ; but, some time after, the empress-mother, and next the emperor himself, died. The charge was then immediately brought, that the Christians, instead of the favourable day which they were bound to fix, had named one that lay under the most malignant influence, and had involved the whole realm in these dreadful calamities. They were ordered to be tried by the Li-pou, or Tribunal of Rites ; and that body, always breathing a virulent hatred against strangers, declared them guilty, and sentenced Schaal to be cut into ten thousand pieces. The four lords, however, who held the regency during the minority of Kang-hi, objected to this punishment as too rigorous, when the judges so far mitigated it as that he should only be divided into quarters. Reports have been spread, which even Du Halde seems to credit, that earthquakes and fireballs prevented the execution of this dreadful sentence ; but Navarete, who was on the spot, candidly declares that he neither witnessed nor heard of any such prodigy. The humane feelings of the regents seem alone to have interposed in their behalf, and to have mitigated the penalty so far as to commute death into imprisonment. The four principal Jesuits were accordingly thrown into irons ; while all the others were hurried to Canton and thrust out of the kingdom. Schaal died soon after ; but the three survivors, as will appear, were afterwards liberated, and restored to court favour.*

* Purchas, p. 359. Navarete's Account of the Empire of China, in Churchill's Collection of Voyages and Travels (6 vols folio, London, 1744), vol. i. p. 251-259. Du Halde, vol. i. p. 490.

CHAPTER VII.

Early Dutch Transactions and Embassies.

Dutch Establishment in the Oriental Islands—Unsuccessful Attempt on Macao—Settlement on the Pescadores—Negotiations with the Chinese—Hostilities—Evacuate the Pescadores—First Expedition to Canton—Advised to send an Embassy to Pe-king—Goyer and Keyzer—Their Reception at Canton—Voyage up the Pe-kiang—Nan-yong-fou—Nan-tchang-fou—Po-yang Lake—The Yang-tse-kiang—Nan-king—The Great Canal—Arrival at Pe-king—Negotiations—Audience—Unfavourable Issue—Return to Canton—Koxinga drives the Dutch from Formosa—They aid the Tartars against him—Endeavour to obtain Free Trade—Embassy under Van Hoorn—His Journey to Pe-king—Interview with Kang-hi—Result of the Embassy—Its Return.

AFTER the Portuguese had, for upwards of a century, maintained a supremacy in the Eastern Seas, they were doomed to experience a gradual but complete reverse. They lost those energies which had raised them to such a height of prosperity, while they had to encounter a rising power, destined soon to eclipse them in the career of maritime enterprise. The Dutch having, after a glorious and severe struggle, emancipated themselves from the yoke of Spain, were naturally impelled by the small extent of their territory to seek for greatness and wealth at sea. This pursuit rendered them at once the rivals and the enemies of the Portuguese. Their efforts, at first timid and on a narrow scale, were at length crowned with such success, as enabled them to expel their

opponents from Java, the Spice Islands, and generally from the shores of India.

When the Dutch approached the coast of the great empire of which we are treating, their attention was very strongly attracted towards the profits which an intercourse with it might yield. In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the subjects of Portugal, in the manner already related, obtained a settlement on the peninsula of Macao, whence they carried on some trade, partly regular and partly contraband. The Hollanders having formed the design of driving them from this post, appeared before it, in 1622, with a squadron of seventeen or eighteen vessels, several of which are said to have been English.* They landed 800 men and advanced towards the fort; but the garrison, mindful of their former valour, made so vigorous a sally, that the invaders were routed, and obliged to re-embark, with the loss of 300 men and several ships. One heroine, dressed in male attire, killed three Dutchmen with her own hand. After this severe disaster, the Dutch turned their views in another direction. In exploring the sea towards the north-east, they came to a group of small islands, called the Piscadores. Here they formed a settlement; but, instead of endeavouring to conciliate the Chinese, soon commenced hostilities, and made numerous captives, whom they treated with such rigour that the greater part of them died. The natives resented this conduct with their accustomed pride, and even when an exchange of prisoners was offered, declared they would not take a thousand for one. Their naval force, however, not being able to cope with that of

* Astley's Collection of Voyages and Travels (4 vols 4to, London, 1745), vol. iii. p. 492.

the enemy, they accepted a flag of truce, and came to a parley. They then stated, that the Dutch could attain their objects only by sending a deputation to the authorities on the adjoining coast. Van Mildert was accordingly despatched to the flourishing city of Amoy, situated at the mouth of the river of Tchang-tcheou, which the Hollanders imagined to be the greatest in China. The Hay-tok, or chief mandarin, stated that he must go to consult his superiors at Hok-sieu (Fou-tcheou-fou), a large city, sixty or seventy leagues to the northward.* At a council held at Hok-sieu, it was determined to send a mission to the Europeans, now in possession of the Pescadores. The leader, a very intelligent and agreeable person, stated, that his government could by no means admit of their continuing to occupy islands which formed part of the Chinese territory ; but that, if they would remove to a station on Taywan or Formosa, their demands would be transmitted, with a favourable recommendation, to the imperial court. He earnestly and courteously pressed them to accede to this proposal, saying, that he had undertaken for the success of his mission, and if it failed his life would be in danger. They felt very much inclined to consent, but did not think themselves authorized by their instructions to quit so advantageous a station. Hostilities were therefore renewed, and preparations made to attack the Dutch with the utmost vigour ; but, through the medium of a captive, they again obtained permission for Van Mildert to visit the city. He was received somewhat pompously, though not without kindness, and when he refused to perform the act of adoration by knocking his head

* Astley, vol. iii. p. 403, note.

against the ground, was allowed to do homage after the fashion of his country. A friendly disposition was again professed ; but the evacuation of the Piscadores was still declared to be an indispensable preliminary.

On the return of this envoy, Reyersz, the commander-in-chief, considered appearances so promising, that he determined to set out himself for Hok-sieu. In proceeding by land from Amoy, he was struck with the rich and populous aspect of the country. Villages occurred almost at every cannon-shot ; every inch of ground was cultivated ; and the crowds, attracted by curiosity to view the strangers, were so immense that the Dutchman and his retinue could with difficulty proceed. They were well accommodated at Hok-sieu ; but, according to the usual policy, were confined to their lodgings as to a prison, unless when called to appear before the Council of Seven. There the same demands and promises were made as on all former occasions ; and Reyersz, though he declared it impossible to accede to the proposed conditions on his own authority, promised to send an immediate despatch, submitting them to the governor at Batavia. This was agreed to ; and he was conveyed back, with a board carried before him, announcing the nature and result of the mission,—doubtless in the terms most flattering to Chinese pride. Unfortunately the answer from the authorities in Java did not arrive at the expected time, and hence infractions of the treaty took place, which ended in an open rupture. In hopes of compelling the Chinese to yield, the commodore sent four of his vessels to blockade the bay of Amoy ; and he accordingly soon received private intimation that the people were so much annoyed by this suspension of their trade, that the negotia-

tion would be gladly renewed. The assailants went on shore, therefore, in two light yachts, having received on board three mandarins as hostages ; and an arrangement was speedily concluded, the terms of which seem to show that they felt their situation somewhat precarious. They engaged to use their utmost influence to make the government at Batavia consent to the removal of the colony to Formosa ; and they obtained in return the promise, not of a free trade, but merely that a sufficient number of vessels, laden with silks, should be sent to their new station, as well as to Java. They were then splendidly entertained, though they had soon reason to suspect that deep treachery was concealed under this apparent friendship, and that an attempt was actually made to poison them. Accordingly, when they returned on board, they saw fifty fire-ships advancing towards their squadron, and that with such rapidity as to allow no time to prepare, either for defence or retreat. They lost several of their vessels, but as soon as they opened their guns the Chinese made off.

The Hollanders now renewed the war with the utmost vigour, captured a number of merchantmen, and made some successful descents on the coast. As the enemy, however, landed 4000 troops, and erected a fortress on the largest of the islands, and had, besides, assembled no fewer than 15,000 barks, it was deemed advisable to accede to their overtures, and a treaty was concluded, nearly on the terms formerly settled. The stronghold was demolished, and in its room was erected Fort Zeland, on the western coast of the island of Formosa.

A considerable time now elapsed without any farther intercourse. Still the Dutch could not but lament

their commercial exclusion from so opulent an empire; and, accordingly, about the middle of the seventeenth century, they determined to make vigorous efforts, and even some considerable sacrifices, in order to effect their object. Their hopes were the more sanguine in consequence of the recent conquest of the country by the Khan of the Mantchoo Tartars, who was reported to have proclaimed Canton a free port. In January 1653, a merchant, named Schedel, was sent thither in a richly-freighted vessel, called the *Brown Fish*. In nine days he anchored in the river, and soon procured an audience of the *Hay-to-nou* or admiral; but both the rulers and people were found imbued with the strongest prejudices against the Dutch nation, which their enemies, the Portuguese, carefully fomented. Schedel, when he presented the governor-general's letter, had it thrown in his face; the chests, with the presents, were opened and tossed about in the most disdainful manner; and he himself was openly reproached as having come with treacherous intentions. Even the mob, as he passed through the streets, were heard exclaiming, "How finely iron fetters would become his legs!" and efforts were made to cover his followers with noisome insects. Yet, having obtained an interview with the chief mandarins, he succeeded in a few hours in effecting a complete change, and obtained from them professions of the most cordial friendship. This favourable turn the Dutch narrative represents as having been accomplished solely by treating them with a few glasses of wine; but according to the Portuguese statement, which we are inclined to believe, much more costly means were employed, and of a nature peculiarly calculated to act upon Chinese func-

tionaries. They extended their gifts even to Ping-na-mong, the viceroy, who gave them a splendid dinner, where they were placed at a table covered with thirty-two silver dishes filled with delicacies ; while liquor was served in cups of gold. Sing-na-mong, the young viceroy, though seemingly favourable to the Portuguese, likewise invited their rivals to dine with him. His mother, who, being newly arrived from Tartary, had not yet adopted the secluded customs of the native ladies, received them in a large hall, and appeared gratified by their appearance and the sounding of their trumpets. In short, they obtained permission both to erect a factory and to trade. The hostile party, however, was strengthened by the arrival of an imperial commissioner, who gave as his opinion, that these were privileges much too ample to be granted to a strange people of doubtful character. The viceroy, considerably embarrassed, privately requested Schedel to depart for the present, and to advise his masters, in the view of obtaining their end, to send an embassy with rich presents to the court of the Great Khan.

The government of Batavia were pleased with the proposal, but could not take so great a step without instructions from their superiors in Europe. They, however, sent Waggenaar, accompanied by Schedel, to keep open the communication. The former found the influence employed against his countrymen very powerful, but lets us into the secret of the means employed by them for counteracting it. He was told that a payment of 10,000 taels of silver would be necessary to procure even an interview with the viceroy.* This sum he declared to be greatly too much,

* Nieuhof, in Ogilby's

vol. iii. p. 403.

though he was willing to pay high for a free trade ; but that privilege, he was still informed, could only be procured through the medium of the proposed embassy.

The Dutch Company in Europe, on this communication being made to them, resolved without hesitation to adopt the expedient thus recommended to them. By their instructions it was fitted out at Batavia, having at its head Peter de Goyer and Jacob de Keyzer, two eminent merchants, with a train of fourteen attendants, and rich presents, consisting principally of the finest European manufactures. Nieuhof, the steward, wrote a narrative of their proceedings, which was esteemed superior to any account of China previously published in this part of the world. They set out on the 14th June 1655, and on the 18th July anchored in the river of Canton. The local government, though probably predisposed in their favour, proceeded with great caution, in consequence of the very unfavourable rumours spread by their enemies. They assumed the appearance of great strictness, pretending to reproach them as having come without due authority ; and they were closely examined as to their names, employments, and other matters. Great dissatisfaction was expressed with the external appearance of a letter to the emperor, which ought to have been stamped with a splendid seal, and enclosed in a golden box. The Portuguese redoubled their activity, representing the Dutch as a band of apostates to their religion and rebels to their king ; as a race who, holding scarcely a spot of land, went round the ocean, committing the most atrocious piracies, and sparing neither friend nor foe. They recapitulated all the outrages of which

they had been guilty, and predicted the most dreadful calamities to the empire were they allowed a footing within it. It is alleged, however, that the envoys smoothed every thing before them by the sums which they lavished on all whom they thought likely to favour their views. They are even reproached with having bestowed forty taels to aid in the construction of an idol temple, though they alleged that the money had been obtained from them under a different pretext. The Portuguese agent assures us, that a Chinese officer, of great influence, undertook to render all their projects abortive, provided he were insured of receiving 800 taels of silver. He hesitated not for so great an object to enter into the engagement ; but as he could not immediately procure the amount, the negotiation was broken off, and the Dutch gained to their side the principal authorities in Canton. They were informed, indeed, that they could not proceed to the capital without an express answer from court ; but there was reason to hope, that the representations transmitted thither would produce a favourable result.

The Dutch waited about four months at Canton till this answer was received, which was very satisfactory. The emperor allowed liberty of trade (to Canton, we presume), and consented that the ambassador, with a small retinue, should repair to his presence.

The embassy, on the 17th March 1656, embarked on the Pe-kiang, in a large vessel hired by themselves, while the government provided fifty smaller ones for the baggage and presents. These boats were dragged up the opposing stream by the efforts of numerous labourers, whom their tyrannical masters compelled to toil in this service ; and if their



Boat-trackers.

efforts slackened through fatigue, "there is one who follows, and never leaves beating them till they go on or die." Although this was only a river-channel, it was rendered very dangerous by impetuous currents rushing between narrow straits, particularly in passing through the mountain-range of Sang-wan-hab, the cliffs of which, in dark and awful forms, overhung the stream. On the 24th, the ambassadors' vessel struck against a sunken rock, and was in considerable hazard. On the 28th, they were exposed to a most furious tempest, in which several of the barks lost their masts and rigging, while a few were dashed against the shelves, and those on board perished. They passed several large cities, but almost all in a ruined state, in consequence of the late conquest by the Tartars, who, wherever they met any serious resistance, demolished all the more magnificent edifices, with the exception of the idol-temples. These being dedicated

to Fo or Boodh, their own divinity, were sacred in their eyes.

At Nan-yong-fou, the embassy disembarked in order to pass that very rugged chain of mountains which separates Quang-tung from Kiang-see. They received a guard of 150 soldiers to defend them against robbers, and had thus, with attendants and bearers, a retinue of 600. On passing the high ground, they were received with great honours at Nan-ngan-fou, where they launched on the Kan-kiang, the great river flowing northward through Kiang-see. Down its rapid stream they were wafted with the utmost velocity, like arrows from a bow; but this too-favourable current, rendering it impossible to stop or guide the vessels, proved as dangerous as the contrary one. The bark containing the presents was caught in eddies, and stranded; and to save her it was necessary to unlade the whole of her precious cargo. On the 23d April, they arrived at Nantchang-fou, a splendid city, capital of Kiang-see. The governor received them with extraordinary honours, censuring the Canton attendants for insufficient respect, and particularly for allowing them to proceed to the palace on foot. Men, he said, who came from such remote countries to congratulate his imperial majesty on his victories, ought to be welcomed with great state. Soon after, having passed the village of Ou-sien-yen, where a vast quantity of porcelain is shipped for every part of the empire, they approached the spacious lake of Po-yang; to secure a happy passage across which all who could afford it offered a hog and a cock, presenting the feet, spurs, and comb, to the idol, while the worshippers themselves feasted on the flesh. Its shores were bordered by lofty hills,

on whose sloping sides stood large villages and even cities. The principal was Nan-kang-fou, which, with its temples and triumphal arches, made a magnificent appearance from the water; but the interior was found to consist of mean houses arranged in winding and irregular streets. The mountains above were crowned with sacred edifices, on one of which, called Quang-liu, there were said to be as many monks as there are days in the year; each residing in a solitary cell, and inflicting on himself frequent lashes, as in the most rigid orders of the Romish church. At Hou-keou-hien, the next city, crowds of old and young flocked to see the strangers, who endeavoured still farther to amuse them by sounding their trumpets; but this strange noise alarmed the natives, who fled from it with cries of terror.

The flotilla soon after entered the stream of the Yang-tse-kiang, the greatest in China, and perhaps in Asia. Its channel, being very broad and bordered by lofty mountains, was subject to violent tempests, so that great skill was required in steering the vessels. These dangers had given rise to superstitious alarms. As the Dutch were cooking a comfortable dinner, the crew came in a body and implored them to desist, stating, that a mighty spirit, in the form of a dragon, who presided over these waters, had such an aversion to the smell of boiled or roasted meat, that the moment he scented it he would raise a destructive storm. The Europeans, without attempting to argue the point, prudently contented themselves with a cold repast.

In descending the river, the embassy passed through a country finely variegated with mountain and valley, and richly cultivated. They passed a succession of

great cities, among which Ngan-king-fou was particularly distinguished by its flourishing commerce. They arrived on the 4th May at Nan-king, the boast of China, long its capital, and superior to any other in the splendour of its edifices, and the polish, industry, and civilisation of its inhabitants. The Tartars, amid all their ravages, had spared every thing in it except the imperial palace. The commissioners remained there fourteen days, and were allowed much greater liberty in viewing it than is permitted in modern times. The governor, a handsome young Tartar, invited them to his residence, and received them in company with his wife and a numerous train of her female attendants. This lady also was pleasing in her person, and extremely frank in her communication with her visitors. She drew out their swords, discharged their pistols, and showed herself extremely curious as to every thing that concerned them. Tea, mixed with milk and salt, was placed in a large silver kettle in the middle of the apartment, and served out of wooden ladles.* The Dutch were dazzled by the grandeur of the temples of Nan-king, one of which, they assert, contained no fewer than 10,000 images. They observed also the Porcelain Tower, the most splendid structure in the empire, and which will be noticed elsewhere. The principal streets were about 100 feet broad, and perfect order maintained amid crowds of people; yet, as in the other cities, the ordinary houses were mean, only one story high, with one room to eat and sleep in, and, as the substitute for a window, there was a small hole filled up with reeds

* Nieuhof, in Ogilby's China, p. 71 *et seq.* Astley, vol. iii. p. 412.

instead of glass. The shops, however, were richly stored with the most valuable commodities, and had boards in front, on which the name of the master, and the commodities sold, were inscribed in golden letters, while above rose a lofty pole, waving with flags and pennons.

The embassy, on the 18th May, began to sail down the river. Instead of the ordinary boats, they were now accommodated with two imperial barges, gilded and painted with dragons, and having a music-room at one end. They observed on its banks several pleasant towns, and on arriving at Koua-tcheou, passed through a handsome stone sluice into the Great Canal. They call it the Royal Water, and consider the scene which it presents equal to any thing in Asia, or in the world. The banks were kept in high order, and planted with stately trees; the adjacent country being embellished with woods and pastures, and diversified by a continued succession of cities, villages, and fine seats. The Chinese earnestly desired to go into a lofty temple situate at its entrance, and to secure a prosperous voyage by a sacrifice of cocks, hogs, and goats; but the envoys would not allow time to be wasted in such proceedings. The first city they reached was Yang-tcheou-fou, which an extensive trade in salt had rendered one of the richest in the empire. It was celebrated for the beauty and agreeable manners of its females; qualities which had rendered them the object of a dishonourable traffic carried on even by the parents, and to such an extent, that the price was by no means exorbitant. In sailing along, they noticed a number of vessels curiously and splendidly ornamented. The serpent-boats, having the form of that

animal, were brilliantly painted, and had on their stern numerous snakes fastened with variously-coloured ribands, and embellished with ensigns and tassels of silk, hair, and feathers. On the top of each mast stood an idol decorated with silken pennons, and on the poop another surrounded with ducks and drakes. The barks were edged with gold and silk fringes. In a few days, they entered the great stream of the Yellow River, the muddy impregnation of which they much exaggerate, when they represent it as rendering the channel scarcely passable. They observed with surprise floating islands, where, on a foundation of twisted bamboo-cane, light wooden houses were erected, in which entire families, to the number sometimes of 200, lived and trafficked. After crossing the Yellow River, they entered what they imagined to be another canal, though it is only a continuation of the great one. The country, though flat, was still as fruitful as ever, and the cities of Tong-tchang and Lin-tsin were in magnitude and splendour entitled to rank among the greatest hitherto passed. At Sang-lo they found Tartars in much larger proportion, and of more polished manners, than in the southern districts. The governor was absent; but his lady, with numerous attendants of her own sex, received them in great pomp, and conversed with them familiarly. On the 4th July, they arrived at Tien-sing-fou, the great emporium of the north of China, which we shall find more fully described by Sir George Staunton. They then ascended a river till the 16th, when, arriving at Sanho, they landed, and soon reached the principal avenue leading to Pe-king. They then placed themselves in regular order; two trumpeters in front;

behind them the Orange flag ; then the ambassadors, with several Tartar lords ; while the officers and soldiers, about fifty in number, with the presents and goods, brought up the rear. The road is described as in bad condition ; yet the multitude of people, horses, and wagons, was as if a great army had been on its march upon the capital.*

On the 17th, the commissioners entered Pe-king through two lofty gates, and, having first alighted and obtained refreshments at a magnificent temple, were conducted to comfortable lodgings. Next day, they were waited upon by a cortège of lords and mandarins, who, after sundry polite questions respecting their health and accommodation, proceeded to put various interrogatories regarding their dominions in Europe, and particularly the nature and amount of their presents. These last were exhibited and approved ; but the other matters were attended with greater difficulty. The Chinese, it appears, had been impressed with the idea, that the Dutch were a band of sea-rovers, who had perhaps a few islands, but not a foot of continental territory. The ambassadors, by showing a map of their country, sought to remove this impression. They durst not, however, mention the name of republic or commonwealth, which would have been equally strange and odious to oriental ears, but represented themselves as deputed by the Prince of Orange. They were then asked, what relation they bore to that sovereign ; and they found that eastern embassies were not considered respectable, unless they had at their head a kinsman of the reigning monarch. Unable to claim any such consangui-

* Nieuhof, in Ogilby's China, p. 103 *et seq.* Astley, vol. iii. p. 422.

nity, they merely said, that in Europe no such custom prevailed. These mercantile envoys were then examined as to the posts they held at court, what were their titles of nobility, and how many troops each of them commanded. Their replies to these puzzling questions are not stated, and doubts may be entertained whether they were given with perfect candour. It was more easy to explain the rank of the Governor of Batavia, by comparing it to that of the Viceroy of Canton.

After some farther queries, the interview closed ; and the foreigners received notice to appear next morning, with their presents, before the imperial council. The day being wet, they went without these accompaniments, from the fear of their being injured ; on which account their reception was far from gracious ; and in order to gratify the emperor's curiosity, they were obliged to send for them. They were here introduced to Adam Schaal, or Scaliger, a Jesuit, who had resided nearly thirty years at Peking, and enjoyed great consideration. This person was employed to put in writing answers to a fresh series of questions respecting themselves and their country. His manners were prepossessing, and he received them at first with much outward courtesy ; but these appearances proved very treacherous, since he contrived to insert in his report that their country had formerly been subject to the Spaniards, to whom it still of right belonged ; however, the chancellor very properly caused this passage to be expunged.

The emperor soon after sent notice that the presents were very acceptable to himself, the empress, and the empress-mother. A request was added for fifty additional pieces of white linen ; but the Dutch could

only muster thirty-six. A brief interval having elapsed, a mandate was issued to the "Great and worthy Li-pou," or council, in which it was stated, that the ambassadors of Holland having come to congratulate the emperor and pay homage, he had been pleased to grant them permission to appear before him on his throne,—a happiness, it was observed, sufficient to make them forget the fatigues of their long journey by sea and land.* The chancellor then began to treat respecting their future intercourse, and inquired whether they could come annually, or, at least, every two or three years, with homage and presents. The envoys, however, who suspected that this condition would not be agreeable to their employers, suggested that, considering the distance, an embassy once in five years might be considered sufficient; but requested permission to send yearly four vessels to Canton for the purposes of trade. After some discussion, it was announced that the emperor considered eight years as a satisfactory interval. This was at first viewed as a gratifying concession; but they were dismayed beyond measure to learn, that their intercourse with the empire was to be limited to these periodical visits, and that the free trade to Canton, which they had understood to have been granted, and for which they had only come to render acknowledgments, was in no degree contemplated. The chancellor's secretary, who professed himself their friend, advised them, on this occasion, to be content with doing homage to his imperial majesty, and to aim at nothing farther. Such advice was wholly foreign to their views; but they soon found that the obstacles to the fulfilment of

* Astley, vol. iii. p. 424.

these were truly formidable. The Portuguese missionaries, acting with Scaliger the Jesuit, had used every art to blacken their character, and to alarm the court as to the danger of giving them an entrance into the country ; while the explanations which they themselves had been obliged to give had not probably heightened the respect in which they were held. Above all, the funds which it now appears had been placed in the hands of the Canton vice-roys, for the purpose of gaining the lords of the court, had by those personages been diverted to their private benefit. Money, that all-powerful instrument of negotiation, was exhausted ; and they did not consider themselves justified in borrowing it at the rate of eight or ten per cent. Amid these troubles, it was announced that the time was come for doing homage to the throne ; and to reconcile them to any want of dignity which might appear in this transaction, they were assured that it was more venerable than even the emperor himself, who, previous to his instalment, uniformly performed ko-tou to it. They were accordingly led to an apartment in the palace, which seemed to them like a library, as there were none present but persons wearing gowns, and with books in their hands. They were next ushered into an open court filled with about 100 mandarins, whom they call doctors. The word being given, " God hath sent the emperor," they were made to perform the requisite movements by successive commands :—" Fall on your knees !"—" Bow the head three times !"—" Stand up !" They then returned home.

The grand audience of the emperor in person, which ought to have followed in three days, was

delayed for a month, in consequence of the death of his youngest brother, by which he was deeply afflicted. At length, the 2d of October being fixed upon, the Canton mandarins came at two o'clock of the preceding day and conducted the Dutch in great pomp into the second court of the palace. They were kept the whole night in gloomy durance, seated on the cold ground, waiting the emperor's arrival, which was to take place at daybreak. Several other ambassadors were there in state-dresses; one from the southern Tartars, with naked arms, in a long coat of sheepskin, dyed crimson, the tuft of a horse's tail rising from the crown of his head, and wearing a pair of boots so enormous that he could with difficulty walk. There was also the representative of the Mogul in a blue coat, so richly embroidered that it looked like beaten gold, and one from the Lama in a yellow robe, with a broad-brimmed hat like a cardinal's, and beads resembling those used in the Romish church. An hour after daybreak, upon a signal being given, all started up. They were then led through successive courts into one very spacious, where stood the imperial throne, amid a scene of extraordinary splendour. On each side were 112 soldiers, holding different flags, and variously habited, except that all wore black hats with yellow feathers. Close to the throne were twenty-two persons holding rich yellow screens, and ten holding gilt circles that resembled the sun; then six with circles imitating the full moon. Fifty-two held poles and standards ornamented with dragons and silken drapery. On either side stood six snow-white horses, whose richly-embroidered trappings were set with pearls and rubies. The throne itself,

glittering with gold and gems, dazzled the eyes of the beholders. The ambassadors being asked their rank, answered, on what ground we know not, "that of viceroys;" and a corresponding station was allotted to them. They were then made to arrange themselves in different places, and twice, by word of command, performed the act of adoration, but still before the empty throne. After they had been treated, however, with some dishes of tea, the bells were sounded, the people fell on their knees, and the emperor was seen ascending the steps. They were not called upon to perform any act of homage to his person, of which, from their position, they could catch only a very slight view. They flattered themselves, that in departing he threw back on them an attentive glance; but they were not honoured with a single word. This mortifying omission they are willing to consider as required by oriental etiquette; but the contrary is proved by numerous examples. At two o'clock, all the ambassadors were regaled with a sumptuous banquet, where, according to Chinese custom, each guest had before him a table, on which were placed about thirty silver dishes; but the viands they contained were by no means palatable. They were made welcome to carry away all that was left,—a permission of which the Tartars gladly availed themselves; stuffing their pockets with roast and boiled meat,—the juice of which was seen dripping from them, as they passed along the streets.*

The emperor, notwithstanding his apparent indifference, continued to feel some curiosity respecting the Dutch. He sent for a suit of their full

* Astley, vol. iii. p. 423.

dress, and expressed admiration at its magnificence. He caused strict inquiry to be made whether they could really live three days and nights under water ; for this it seems had been affirmed by the Portuguese. They solemnly abjured any pretensions to such a miraculous power, which they well knew had been imputed to them from no friendly motives. As their departure drew near, the imperial presents were delivered, consisting chiefly of small sums of silver, with some ornamented cloths. On the 16th, they received notice to repair to the court of the Lipou, in order to receive an official communication addressed to the Governor-general of Batavia. On their arrival, one of the officers took it from a table covered with a yellow carpet, and declared to them the contents. It was written both in the Chinese and Tartar languages, gilded on the edges, and painted on both sides with golden dragons. Being then wrapped in a silken scarf, and put into a box, it was delivered to the ambassadors, who received it kneeling. The contents, though civilly worded, were decidedly unfavourable. The Dutch were described as a brave and wise people, who, though dwelling in a country 10,000 miles from his, had shown their noble mind by sending presents to the emperor. They had asked for a free trade, which would redound much to the benefit of his dominions ; but out of his tender care for them, considering the distance and the tempests to which they would be exposed on the seas of China, he desired that they might not come oftener than once in eight years, nor with more than 100 men in company, twenty of whom might repair to court.* He expressed his hope (though well knowing the con-

* Astley, vol. iii. p. 429.

on the 22d, through a finely-watered country, abounding in fruit-trees and plants, and covered with rich crops of rice. It was necessary, however, to have a body of troops perpetually scouring the country, to defend it against bands of robbers, who found shelter in the mountains. After quitting their junks, they came to Hok-swa, a fine town, pleasantly situated. On the 29th, they passed the river Lo-yang by a bridge, remarkable for the immense masses of freestone with which it was paved, some being above 70 feet long. Benches were ranged on its sides, adorned with the figures of lions, dragons, and other animals. The country-people, influenced by the superstitious ideas usually excited by any wonderful object, considered it the work of angels, who had reared this remarkable structure in a single night.*

The vice-admiral and his companion passed through Swansifoe (Suen-tcheou-fou), at that time the seat of a very great trade, and Tan-way, which is described, probably with some exaggeration, as one of the most beautiful and populous cities in all China. They observed also a number of other towns and villages, some flourishing, others ruined by the recent wars. On the 4th October, they reached Sink-sieu, a handsome city, situated on a river, paved with freestone, and surrounded by a broad wall. They were lodged in a spacious inn, which, like a similar one at Tan-way, was capable of accommodating 1000 men with their horses. They now hastened forward to the camp, where they found the viceroy, the general, and the governor of the city, sitting in a large pa-

* Astley, vol. iii. p. 435.

vilion. They were received with much outward civility, though most of their presents were declined, and the arrangements in regard to business were not very satisfactory. Free trade, the grand object of their solicitation, could not, it was said, be conceded without an express order from the emperor. Even the naval co-operation was not accepted; because the viceroy had opened a negotiation with the towns on the coast attached to Koxinga, and hoped to obtain their peaceable submission. Much regret was therefore expressed, on learning that Bort had resolved to commence operations against them, in consequence of not having received a letter in which his highness requested him to wait his return to Hok-sieu. On the whole, they had no reason to believe that they were regarded with much cordiality, since, on the arrival of a number of vessels with goods, they were not allowed for two days to stir out of their lodgings. On the 8th, they obtained permission to depart, and, on the 29th, it was not without pleasure that they found themselves again at Hok-sieu.*

Bort, on putting to sea, immediately commenced a species of piratical warfare against the adherents of Koxinga, which included nearly the whole maritime population of Fo-kien. He took a number of their vessels; burned and plundered their harbours; but not being able to effect any thing important, set sail for Batavia on the 1st March 1663.

The colonial government were exceedingly dissatisfied with the result of this expedition, and determined to redouble their efforts to obtain redress. They fitted out an armament on a greater scale,

* Astley, vol. iii. pp. 436, 437.

Tartars, by the aid of civil dissensions, penetrated into China, it was thought, had Koxinga been inclined, he might at least have prevented them from entering Fo-kien. On the contrary, he was gained over, and secretly aided their designs ; though, when the khan had completed his conquest, so far from viewing him as an ally, he saw in him his only rival. With such address did he conduct himself, that he contrived to induce the pirate to visit the court, where he was treacherously thrown into fetters, and afterwards cruelly put to death. This crime was of no avail to the Tartar monarch ; for Koxinga, or Tching-tching-kong, the son, immediately hoisted his father's flag, and was joined by all his adherents. Commencing a naval war, and attaching himself to the independent party among the Chinese, he soon became more powerful than his parent had been, commanding 100,000 men, with whom he at one time besieged Nan-king, though without success. The chief seat of his authority was in some small islands on the coast of Fo-kien, whence he spread his ravages in every direction ; nor was it until the whole strength of the empire was brought against him, that he sustained several defeats, and was driven from successive positions along the shore. Thus straitened, and conceiving himself to have some cause to complain of the Dutch, he cast his eyes on their settlement at Formosa, and determined to attack it. Fort Zeland was accordingly invested, and, after a siege of ten months, was forced to capitulate in March 1661, when, contrary to the express conditions of surrender, he put to death, or threw into prison, several of the principal merchants.*

* Astley, vol. iii. pp. 433, 439.

The authorities at Batavia, on being informed of the loss of a colony from which they had anticipated many advantages, immediately fitted out twelve vessels, carrying from eleven to thirty-two guns, and having on board 528 seamen and 756 soldiers, which they placed under the direction of Balthazar Bort. This commander, on the 12th August 1662, entered the mouth of the Chang (Min), on which Hok-sieu is situated ; and, having taken a small garrison belonging to Koxinga, sent to that city intelligence of his arrival. The Viceroy of Fo-kien being encamped with his army at Sink-sieu (more commonly called Hing-hoa-fou), the interpreter was sent forward to him ; but, in the mean time, several mandarins from Hok-sieu came on board, and received the Dutch with the utmost politeness. On the 8th September, an officer arrived from the imperial lieutenant, requesting the admiral to send him the letter from the governor-general, and also some trusty persons to confer with him upon the great affair now in agitation. Bort selected Van Campen and Noble, the second and third in command, who were desired to press their demands with the greatest urgency, as the Governor of Hok-sieu declined any co-operation with them, without express instructions from his superiors. They were told also to avail themselves of this opportunity to obtain freedom of trade, which had all along been their main object.

These deputies from the Dutch squadron embarked on the Chang upon the 18th September, and on the 20th, after passing several handsome towns, arrived at Hok-sieu. Having obtained an honourable reception, they pursued their journey,

king, with every reasonable hope of obtaining a free trade, and even some island, or convenient position, in which to deposite their goods.*

The governor-general, on learning all the particulars of Bort's expedition, did not think it advisable to embark the funds of the Company any farther in these costly and fruitless enterprises. It seemed better to relinquish all hopes of recovering Formosa, and merely to send a well-appointed embassy to procure, if possible, a free trade with the principal seaports, and places fit for erecting warehouses. At its head was placed Peter van Hoorn, privy-councillor and chief-treasurer of India, having under him Noble and nineteen other functionaries. They were attended by five armed vessels, laden with presents and merchandise; the former, besides globes, lanterns, and other curious instruments, comprising horses and oxen of peculiarly fine breeds. Having sailed on the 4th July 1664, they arrived on the 5th August at the mouth of the river of Hoksieu. After some difficulties with the mandarins of the port, they reached the city on the 24th, and were received in a polite manner by the viceroy and general, who were highly pleased with the gifts, and viewed with particular admiration the horses and oxen. A message was immediately despatched to the emperor, to which a favourable answer was anticipated; though various obstacles occurred in the arrangement of their affairs, which led to a tedious and rather difficult negotiation. They were determined not to set out for Pe-king till they had seen the whole of their cargo disposed of. But though the Chinese authorities did not positively refuse

* Astley, vol. iii. p. 452.

this, they threw in the way various impediments. They asserted that the merchants of Java adulterated their pepper with sand and water, and otherwise carried on trade in a discreditable manner; allegations which are declared to be wholly without foundation. The most serious dissension, however, arose in consequence of a quantity of bullion being found on board a Chinese vessel from Batavia, whence its exportation was prohibited; upon which the Dutch made a seizure of the whole cargo. This ill-timed step was very deeply resented; and the viceroy intimated, that until restitution were made, no amicable arrangement could be concluded. Van Hoorn seems to have regretted that, for such a trifle, he had involved himself in this dilemma, yet knew not well how to recede, without a direct contravention of the colonial regulations, and a loss of personal dignity. At length, finding the necessity urgent, he agreed to the very awkward compromise, that the goods should be lodged in a particular place, and that no opposition would be made to the owners who might come to carry them off. The viceroy accordingly sent a party, who, like a band of robbers, broke open the door, and possessed themselves of the articles. The captors pretended to be absent or unconscious, till, noticing that the persons employed took the opportunity to supply themselves with other commodities which lay within their reach, they were obliged to set a limit to the transaction.*

These troubles and difficulties being at length over, the ambassadors embarked, with about fifty vessels, on that branch of the river Min, which flows from the southern boundary of Tche-kiang. They

* Astley, vol. iii. p. 460.

passed numerous towns and villages, and two great cities, Yen-ping-fou and Kien-ning-fou, each almost equal to that which they had quitted. On the 10th February, the river being no longer navigable, they landed, and prepared for the passage of the chain of mountains, which here separates the two provinces. It was then necessary to provide 600 coolies or porters, and to place the oxen in frames, the road being too rough for them to pass on foot. Yet the track, though high and steep, was bordered by numerous villages, and every conspicuous spot was adorned with temples. Having at length reached the plain, they embarked at Pou-tcheou, and descended the river Chang, which traverses Tche-kiang. In navigating this stream to Hang-tcheou-fou, they observed a fertile country, every where under high culture, and covered with a dense population.

They spent several days at Hang-tcheou-fou, but do not give any description of that celebrated city, whose beautiful environs they appear not to have visited. They were much more struck with Sou-tcheou-fou, though chiefly with its immense trade. The boats were so crowded that it was scarcely possible to penetrate through them; and they passed also numerous large barks belonging to the emperor. The customs levied at its entrance were said to amount to half a million sterling; yet the houses were slightly constructed, and entirely of timber. On the 6th, they entered the stream of the great river Yang-tse-kiang, the genius of which was as usual propitiated by various ceremonies and offerings. Having again entered the Grand Canal, and landed at a village, they were accosted by

two mandarins, who proved much more courteous and communicative than the rest of their order. They held out good hopes of success, assuring them, that "if they fed the courtiers well, nothing would be denied at Pe-king." The rest of the journey was confined to the great highway which leads to the capital; and the narrative consists of little more than an enumeration of towns and villages. On the 20th June 1667, they arrived at Pe-king, after having travelled six months, during which they had seen thirty-seven cities and 335 villages.*

When passing through the streets to the imperial palace, they were annoyed by crowds of curious spectators. On reaching the court of the chief Tu-tang, they were required, not only to produce the emperor's letter, and to perform the usual threefold prostration before it, but also to exhibit the presents. On arriving at their lodgings, too, they were much mortified to find the apartments very small and incommodious, —a deficiency which the proper officers promised to remove. They were, however, still more disconcerted when it was announced, that at daybreak the very next morning they must appear with the gifts before his imperial majesty. This prince was Kang-hi, afterwards celebrated for his years and wisdom, but then only a boy of sixteen, who governed the empire under the direction of four Zouta-zhins or guardians. He felt, probably, a youthful impatience to behold the foreign curiosities, which his guardians were not unwilling to indulge. They would listen, therefore, to no apology for delay. The envoys, accordingly, were led next morning in the dark through five gates into an inner court, where

* Astley, vol. iii. p. 474.

the supreme Zou-ta-zhin, an aged Tartar, with one eye and a white beard, surveyed the horses and oxen. He directed Hoorn and his colleagues, when the emperor came, to place themselves in a kneeling posture; and soon after there appeared four chargers with yellow trappings, on one of which sat the youthful ruler. He viewed the animals with apparent pleasure, and caused two of the horses to be rode before him. A cup of bean-broth was presented to him at his own request, and also to the embassy, which they drank on their knees. The cattle were then taken to a stable, and the strangers were dismissed, after having had a full view of his majesty above half an hour; but they had scarcely got home, when they were required to hasten back with the remaining presents. The monarch, however, did not appear on this occasion, though immediately after their departure, and while their attendants were arranging the articles, he came in to examine them.

On the 23d, two hours before daybreak, the Dutch were desired to repair to the palace and make a formal delivery of their gifts. Corean ambassadors were introduced at the same time, with a train of fifty attendants, dressed in the Chinese style, but with little magnificence; and they were placed in a less conspicuous situation. The articles, arranged in a spacious court, were regularly presented; but the emperor did not appear, though an interview was promised two days afterwards. They were asked to come next morning to do homage to his seal. In performing this singular ceremony they were led to one of the palace-gates, through which they saw a small octangular edifice, which was said to contain the imperial signet. The word was then

given: "Kneel!" then "Bow your heads three times and rise!" then, "Kneel down and bow three times more!" lastly, "Stand up, and go to your lodgings!"* The 25th being appointed for the state-reception, they were conducted to a court in the palace soon after midnight, and were obliged to remain two hours in the dark. The rising sun shone on a brilliant spectacle; numerous mandarins in their richest dresses; umbrellas, flags, and standards of yellow, blue, and white; elephants with gilded towers on their backs, and horses richly caparisoned. All the ambassadors and chiefs then entered the palace, and half an hour having elapsed, a small bell was rung, when the emperor was supposed to arrive, and they were soon after called upon to do profound homage, though without seeing either the throne or himself. A place was then assigned, in which they had a full view of his majesty, who, after a brief space, rose and seemed to be coming towards them, but he suddenly turned aside and went out; so that they never enjoyed any share of his personal conversation.

On the 12th June, the embassy, according to usage, were entertained at a splendid banquet. When they had dined, they were asked if they had brought bags to carry away the remainder, and having replied in the negative, small sacks were brought, into which the victuals were promiscuously thrust. The tu-tang presided, and had a splendid table; but others, even of the great mandarins, had very poor fare spread for them on mats upon the floor. A second festival was given in the same style on the following day; and, on the 14th, the Dutch

* Astley, vol. iii. p. 476.

received, with signs of profound homage, the emperor's presents, the delivery of which portended their speedy departure.*

The ambassadors had taken an early opportunity to state their requests ; which were, that they might be allowed to come annually and carry on a free trade, not only at Canton, but at the principal ports of Fo-kien and Tche-kiang ; to traffic there with what merchants they pleased, and for all articles which were not prohibited ; finally, to have warehouses in which their goods might be deposited. To smooth the way for these propositions, they had prepared rich presents for each of the principal grandees ; but those persons, declaring the acceptance to be contrary to the rules and customs of the court, steadily refused them. In fine, the only result of this grand expedition was a sealed letter, of the contents of which they were wholly ignorant, but which did not in fact grant any of the privileges they so anxiously solicited.

Soon after, Van Hoorn, according to the understood usage, took his departure from Pe-king, and retraced exactly the route by which he had come ; so that little or no opportunity occurred for farther observation. After some transactions of minor importance at Hok-sieu, he set sail for Batavia, where he arrived on the 7th October 1667.

* Astley, vol. iii. p. 479.

CHAPTER VIII.

French Missions into China.

French Mission to Siam—A Party proceed to China—Arrival at Ning-po-fou—Opposition encountered—Father Verbiest obtains Permission for them to come to Pe-king—Reception at Hang-tcheou-fou and Sou-tcheou-fou—Journey thence to Pe-king—Death of Verbiest—Audience of the Emperor—Kang-hi favours and employs them—Pretended Chinese Princess at Paris—Complaints made against the Missionaries—Violent Persecutions.

FRANCE had scarcely any existence as a maritime and commercial power till the reign of Louis XIV. That prince, ambitious of every kind of greatness, and viewing with envy the extraordinary influence which England and Holland had obtained by trade and manufactures, spared no exertions to raise his kingdom also to eminence in these pursuits. The expeditions undertaken with this view into distant regions were guided by that mixed spirit of religion and science which prevailed at his court, and particularly distinguished the order of Jesuits. A remarkable mission of this nature was sent, in 1685, to Siam, accompanied by Tachard, Le Comte, Gerbillon, and Bouvet. These distinguished persons were instructed, when their primary object should be attained, to make an effort to penetrate into China, with the view both of opening a mercantile intercourse, and of diffusing the light of Christianity. Accordingly, when, in 1686, Tachard returned to

the suburbs, till a communication could be received from the viceroy. But that great personage, adhering to ancient usage, transmitted a sharp reprimand to the governor for having given any countenance to strangers, who came to preach a foreign faith. He made a report to the grand tribunal of the Li-pou at Pe-king, representing the missionaries as having entered China for sinister ends, contrary to the fundamental laws of the kingdom. This body, ever hostile to innovation, immediately prepared a decree for their banishment, and sent it for the emperor's signature. Had this been affixed, the preachers could not but have anticipated the most calamitous results; for the viceroy, who loved money as much as he hated the true faith, would probably have confiscated the cargo of a vessel which had brought such passengers; and the captain, ruined through their means, was very likely to seek redress by throwing them overboard. But these disasters were averted by the interposition of Father Verbiest.*

One of the most important duties of the government, as has been already mentioned, consists in the composition of an annual calendar, exhibiting the daily position of the sun in the zodiac, and the places of all the planets. This work, when completed, is delivered with great pomp to the princes and officers of state, by whom it is received kneeling. Its use is indispensable to every Chinese, who finds in it, not only the revolution of the seasons, and the times of sowing and planting, but learns the lucky and unlucky minute for cutting his hair, shearing his sheep, and performing all the functions

* Le Comte, tome i. p. 19-35.

of life. The construction of this guide is intrusted to the Tribunal of Astronomy, which, after the disgrace of the Portuguese, was composed entirely of oriental members. These sages accordingly drew up one of their national almanacs ; but when they presented it to Kang-hi, that young prince had the sagacity to perceive that there was something essentially wrong, though he knew not what it was or how to rectify it. Finding no satisfactory explanation among his own subjects, he determined to have recourse to the missionaries who were still in irons at Pe-king ; the nine chains with which they were bound were accordingly taken off, and they were conducted to the palace. The calendar being submitted to them, Verbiest, the most learned of their number, immediately informed the emperor that it was quite erroneous, and could be remedied only by cutting off an entire month from the following year. Stunned by this intelligence, his majesty called a council of the great mandarins ; and though only a few of that august body could make any pretension to a knowledge of the heavens, several exclaimed, that it would be shameful to confide so high a concern to a handful of foreigners. But a great majority, after examining the calculations of Verbiest, candidly declared them to be as correct as the others were faulty. Unfortunately, the original production was already printed and circulated throughout all China ; and it was most mortifying to the imperial council, who were regarded as possessing a dignity and wisdom almost superhuman, to confess to the entire nation so gross a blunder. The priest was entreated to consider if, by some means, he could for this one time throw a veil over it ; but as he declared that he could not

alter the heavens, the people were ordered, by proclamation, not to use this intercalary month, to the great perplexity of the whole realm ; it being deemed very mysterious how so large a portion of time could be at once cut off by an imperial decree.*

Verbiest, in consequence of this success, being placed at the head of the tribunal of astronomy, was viewed with much favour by Kang-hi ; and though he could not procure full liberty of conscience for his fellow Christians, he obtained a considerable remission of the former severity. The French had opened a communication with him from Siam, and were careful to apprise him of their critical situation at Ning-po-fou ; while he, though a Fleming, being in the service of the Portuguese government, had pretty strong motives for viewing with jealousy the entrance into China of any other nation ; and instructions were understood to have been transmitted from Goa and Macao, breathing, with regard to them, any thing rather than a benevolent spirit. The good father, however, viewing the cause of his religion and his order as superior to any political considerations, warmly espoused their cause. Having learned that the hostile decree of the Li-pou had been transmitted to the emperor, then on a hunting-excursion in Tartary, he wrote, stating every argument which could induce his majesty to reject the advice. He dwelt particularly on the skill of these foreigners in astronomy, and the services which they might render in the composition of the calendar. Kang-hi delayed the decision for a fortnight, till his return to Peking, when, after a conference with Verbiest, he determined that they should be conducted with

* Du Halde, vol. iii. p. 89-106.

honour to the capital ; and the Li-pou as well as the viceroy, to their extreme mortification, were made the channel through which this mandate was conveyed.*

The missionaries, having their fears dispelled by this intelligence, hastily prepared for the important journey. During their stay at Ning-po-fou, they had held a good deal of intercourse with the mandarins, and made attempts to convert them, not without some hopes of success. Even the governor, on occasion of a severe drought, agreed to come in state to their chapel, while they made prayers for rain ; but he afterwards requested a delay till next morning, being at that particular moment obliged to attend a sacrifice for the same purpose made to a dragon. The fathers then informed him, that the true God, whom they worshipped, could not accept a homage thus strangely divided ; and they urged him, as a man of judgment, to renounce such wild and senseless idolatry. He seemed to feel in a certain degree the force of their arguments, but, holding an official station, he would not depart from the rites and usages of his country. They set sail from Ning-po-fou on the 26th November 1687, the governor having provided boats and a mandarin to attend them. The way led through extensive and cultivated plains, with a background of rugged and rocky mountains. The eminences were clothed with woods, among which the cypress, the pine, and the tallow tree, were conspicuous. They sailed for a great space along a noble canal, bordered with a fine facing of large stones, and from which numerous branches diverged over a plain as level as the sea. Chao-hing, a flourishing city, is pleasantly si-

* Le Comte, tome i. p 31-35.

tuated amid these canals, branches of which run through the streets, and are crossed by a great number of lofty bridges with one arch, but of materials so slight as not to bear a carriage. There appeared, too, such a succession of houses and hamlets, that the whole seemed almost as one city. As they approached Hang-tcheou-fou, on the 30th, the Chinese Christians, who had learned with joy their journey to Pe-king, met and prevailed upon them to enter elegant sedan-chairs, which were then locked upon them, and they were borne in pomp through the streets, with horse and foot marching, standards waving, and trumpets sounding before them ; while on a board painted red was inscribed the label, "Doctors of the Heavenly Law, sent for to Court." Le Comte professes to have been much displeased, and to have given the converts a sharp reprimand for this compulsory triumph, yet admits that his anger was soon disarmed by their meek and pious deportment. The missionaries had much pleasure in spending a few days at this city, though they were less dazzled with it than travellers have usually been. The principal street was handsome and crowded with people, but the others were little better than rows of cottages ; and even the lake, with its surrounding villas, did not equal their expectation.*

The viceroy, whose position with regard to the French was extremely mortifying, devised, like the other mandarins, an apology for not waiting upon them. To avert, however, the danger of imperial displeasure, he was careful to provide attendants, and every accommodation for their journey. They were supplied with a barge seventy feet long and sixteen

* Du Halde, vol. i. p. 72-76.

broad, which, besides lodging for the master and his family, whose sole abode it was, with space for the crew and servants, afforded to the travellers a handsome dining-parlour, with three commodious bed-rooms, all varnished, gilt, and painted. Respect was also testified by sundry ceremonies, with which they would have gladly dispensed. Their departure in the morning was celebrated by a deafening sound of gongs, trumpets, and music; and the same was repeated at every meeting with a mandarin or other grandee. When they stopped at night, a small party appeared on the bank, to whom the master made a long harangue, exhorting them to the performance of their duties, to which they replied with loud shouts. The sentries during the night beat two sticks against each other, without any intermission, to make known that they did not sleep,—an offence which the French would gladly have pardoned, had they been allowed to follow the example. In spite of these annoyances, Le Comte never felt any journey less fatiguing, and at the end of thirteen days was as fresh as if he had never stirred out of a house.*

The mission, having left Hang-tcheou-fou on the 21st December, soon embarked on the Great Canal, which they found covered with numberless vessels. The country on its banks was extremely fruitful and populous; and the dead level of its surface suggested the idea, that it had formerly been quite under water. This conclusion, however, seems doubtful. The celebrated city of Sou-tcheou-fou struck them less by its beauty than by its vast extent; and they were inclined to credit the report,

* Le Comte, tome i. p. 39-44.

that it was four leagues in circumference and contained several millions of souls. Here they met a Christian convert of high distinction, who had attained the rank of Han-lin, or great doctor, and had recommended himself to the emperor by his skill in composition. This eminent personage not only received them with the utmost courtesy, but, in testimony of reverence, and in spite of every objection, prostrated himself before them, beating his forehead against the ground. Quitting the city, they proceeded along the canal till they reached Tan-yang, where they were obliged to land on account of improvements that were making on this magnificent work. On the 2d January, they enjoyed from the top of a hill a most interesting view of the Yang-tse-kiang, which was as broad as an arm of the sea, crowded with shipping, and having on its opposite banks the great commercial cities of Tching-kiang and Chat-tcheou. In crossing this river, they were struck with the appearance of a high island crowned with edifices, which appeared like an enchanted spot, and is called by the natives the Golden Mountain. Passing Chat-tcheou in the night, they came in the morning to Yang-tcheou-fou, a flourishing commercial place, which, according to the exaggerated report of the natives, contains 2,000,000 of inhabitants.* The road now skirted the lake of Kan-yeu (Kao-yeou-hou), which resembled an ocean covered with an infinite number of barks. Hoai-ngan-fou, which they reached on the 14th, appeared still more considerable than Yang-tcheou-fou; but the Grand Master of these canals, rivers, and waters, having taken up his residence there, and occupied the public

* Du Halde, vol. i. p. 77-84.

inn, they were very poorly accommodated. Soon after, they crossed the broad stream of the Hoang-ho, not, however, without difficulty, on account of the masses of ice with which its channel was encumbered. As they approached the province of Shantung, the country began to rise into eminences, and, for the first time during this long journey, they saw a flock of sheep. Proceeding a little farther, they found themselves enclosed between ridges of naked, steep, and craggy mountains; and the wens or swellings in the neck (*goîtres*), with which about a third of the people were affected, formed another characteristic of an alpine region. These heights were uncultivated, —a circumstance which the travellers ascribed to the ravages of civil war; but the intervening valleys displayed the usual laborious tillage, and were full of people. The houses, however, were rudely built; the inns miserable; they had nothing to sleep on but a piece of brick-work fitted to the human shape; and the fare, notwithstanding the cheapness of provisions, was very scanty.*

The province of Pe-tche-lee, consisting of extensive plains under high cultivation, presented a more cheerful aspect. Having stopped, however, at a village near Pe-king to receive tidings from court, they were struck with equal astonishment and grief upon learning the death of Father Verbiest. They thus lost, not only a friend to whom they owed the deepest obligations, but a powerful protector, without whom they could scarcely consider themselves safe at this strange court.† The fathers resident at Pe-king were precluded by the rules of Chinese mourning

* Du Halde, vol. i. p. 86-93.

† Ibid. vol. i. p. 98. Le Comte, tome i. p. 46.

pear before them. His majesty sent notice that they might decline this interview if they chose ; but they thought it more prudent, as well as dignified, to go through the usual course. They were received with respectful politeness, and informed that they must be introduced by their Christian brethren. They obtained permission to settle in any part of the empire they wished, though they afterwards understood that it was the intention of the sovereign to retain them at Pe-king near his own person. Being anxious, however, with a view to spiritual objects, to spread themselves over the country, it was arranged, through Padre Pereira, that three of them should reside in the provinces, while two remained at court.*

On an early day, notice was given to the envoys that they were to be presented to the emperor. Alighting at the first gate of the palace, they walked through eight very spacious courts, surrounded with numerous edifices. But the only striking object was the audience-hall, placed in the uppermost part of five large structures rising one above the other, each surrounded by balustrades of white marble, and itself supported by varnished pillars, and roofed with gilded tiles. The prince, however, did not receive them in public, or with any pomp ; but on account of the event which had placed his family in mourning, made the audience altogether private. They found him in a small chamber, carefully divested of every ornament, sitting on a low sofa ; while a number of attendants, plainly habited, stood on each side in a respectful attitude. The French made no hesita-

* Le Comte, tome i. p. 49-55.

tion to perform the ko-tou, or act of adoration, beating their foreheads nine times against the ground. He received them very graciously, and put many questions respecting their country, their journey, and the manner in which they had travelled. He then requested to know if there was any other favour which they were desirous to obtain, bidding them freely ask it. The envoys, who seem to have been no strangers to the arts of a court, replied, that their only wish was to be allowed to lift up their hands daily to the true God in prayers for his majesty's prosperity. This reply was well taken, and they were kindly dismissed.*

The mission had a further proof of the emperor's good-will towards their order in the pomp with which the funeral of Father Verbiest was celebrated; though, perhaps, it savoured more of oriental parade than of the simple dignity of his Christian profession. The ceremony began by his sending his father-in-law with seven other lords, who, on entering the apartment where the coffin lay, fell down before it, and remained for some time dissolved in tears, which, of course, were only those of etiquette. In front of the procession, which then began to move, was a trophy thirty feet high, on which were inscribed, in golden characters, the name and titles of the deceased. Next appeared a cross ornamented with flags, and carried between two rows of converts clothed in white, and weeping. This was followed by pictures, first of the Virgin, and then of St Michael, adorned with silken robes. Behind was displayed the panegyric which the emperor with his own hand had composed on the deceased; it was

* Le Comte, tome i. p. 59.

written on a large piece of yellow satin, and had a numerous and reverential attendance. Lastly came the coffin, finely varnished and gilded, and attended by the missionaries, the imperial deputies, and a numerous body of mandarins, who closed the procession.*

From this time the missionaries, who were able men, and well acquainted with the sciences, acquired a great ascendancy at the court of China. The enlightened mind of Kang-hi appreciated their superiority to his own people in various branches; he became their pupil, and took regular lessons from them. He assigned them a spot within the precincts of the palace for building a church and convent, furnishing materials and even money to assist in its construction. It is true that the importunity of the Li-pou tribunal, and of some leading mandarins, once extorted from him a decree prohibiting the exercise of Christianity; but, on the urgent representations of the foreigners and their friends, it was soon rescinded. The strangers were also employed in various important offices, for which their knowledge qualified them. They were formed into detachments, which proceeded through the several provinces of the empire, and even its subject-territories in Thibet and Tartary, to make a complete survey of those regions, and draw a map of them upon scientific principles. Copies of these observations being transmitted to D'Anville, afforded him the means of constructing his Atlas of China and Chinese Tartary, in which these countries were delineated with much greater precision than they had ever been before. The Frenchmen proved also extremely

* Le Comte, tome i. pp. 72, 73.

useful in conducting the negotiation with Russia; and Father Gerbillon accompanied the commission sent to the frontier to fix the boundaries of the two empires. A numerous branch of the imperial house became converts, and made an open profession of Christianity.*

The intelligence of these circumstances excited an extraordinary interest in France, where there reigned for some time a sort of Chinomania, during which the most extravagant accounts respecting that empire were implicitly believed. Numerous additional missionaries followed in the train of those who had so successfully made their way. Le Comte mentions a curious circumstance which arose out of this state of the public mind: After his return home, he was surprised to hear that there was in Paris a Chinese princess of the first rank, entitled Couronné, who, having embarked for Japan with a view to a matrimonial connexion, had been taken first by a Dutch and then by a French vessel, by the owners of which she had been brought to Europe, and, after much cruel treatment, had been left destitute. Being able, however, to pronounce the word Pe-king, she attracted the notice of ladies of rank, who not only relieved her wants, but introduced her to the first circles, where she was received with the respect due to her illustrious birth; even poems were composed in celebration of her story. Le Comte suspected fraud from the first moment he heard of this adventure. Never in the East had he heard the appellation of Couronné; Chinese princesses scarcely leave their apartments,

* Du Halde, vol. i. p. 495-497. Le Comte, tome ii. p. 255-292. Lettres Edifiantes, tome xx. p. xliv.-xlv.

far less were they likely to go out to sea on such an expedition ; it was as if a princess of France had embarked to marry a mandarin of Siam. The Marquis de Croissi insisted on arranging an interview, by which the lady's pretensions might be brought to the test. She could not refuse, though she deemed it necessary to impeach the honesty of Le Comte, and when the time came was not to be found ; however, " they unkennelled her," and she then proceeded to face him with the utmost intrepidity. The first look removed every remaining doubt ; her features, her air, her gait, had nothing Chinese. She immediately began conversing with fluency, and in a kind of broken French ; but without any mixture of the idiom of China, and pronouncing with facility sounds which no native of that country can utter. She talked of having travelled in less than three days from Nan-king to Pe-king,—a distance of more than 200 leagues,—and described gold coins which were never used in the empire. He traced some Chinese characters, which he put into her hand ; but she placed the writing upside down, and began uttering with rapidity words that had not the least relation to the subject before her. He then spoke to her in that language ; to which she replied in " a wild ridiculous gibberish," which he firmly believed was as unintelligible to herself as it was to him. Having thus gone through her part, she insisted that she had triumphantly stood her trial, and that the insinuations of Le Comte against her arose from pure malignity ; and it would appear that she continued still to have her adherents.*

* Le Comte, tome i. p. 180-188.

The prosperity of the Romish missionaries ceased with the reign of their protector Kang-hi. His successor Yong-tching, though a prince in many respects of great merit, was superstitiously attached to the laws and institutions of China, and open to those complaints against innovation which the mandarins were ever ready to prefer. The Viceroy of Fo-kien took the lead, and drew up a long list of charges against this new sect. He complained that the Jesuits undermined the reverence of the people for the ancient sages, and even for Confucius, teaching them to reserve all their respect for a foreign teacher; that the new converts were deficient in veneration for their parents, and in the honours due to their memory. He condemns the practice of both sexes assembling promiscuously at public worship, as a violation of all decorum, and leading to the most dangerous consequences, as did also their going alone to speak secret words to the Europeans (confession). But the most lamentable feature was, the want of zeal for the rearing of progeny, that primary duty of every Chinese. The mother, on her daughter coming of age, no longer felt herself bound to provide her a husband; while a man, on losing his wife, did not feel it imperative instantly to supply her place, but deemed it more suitable to interpose some delay. Celibacy itself was represented as a meritorious state; and many females were destined to it from infancy. From the establishment of such a sect, the downfall of all that was venerable in the institutions of China might be surely anticipated. The emperor, having referred this memorial to the Tribunal of the Li-pou, received the answer which that body on such occa-

sions never failed to give. They drew up, for the imperial signature, a decree in entire conformity to the viceroy's representation. The missionaries resident at Pe-king, being necessary for the construction of the calendar, were allowed to remain, but without any liberty of teaching their religion. All the others were banished; the exercise of Christianity was prohibited, and every one who had embraced it was ordered, under the severest penalties, to renounce his profession. The churches were converted, some into granaries, others into schools or halls for performing the rites due to ancestors. The heaviest weight of punishment fell upon those members of the royal blood, both male and female, who had become converts to the new faith, and adhered to it with unshaken constancy. These illustrious persons were sent as exiles into a desolate part of Tartary. When their firmness remained proof against these severities, they were brought back and thrust into solitary dungeons at Tsi-nan, where two of the princes sunk under the privations imposed upon them; and even the ashes of one, it is said, were treated with the utmost indignity. The princesses, at once immured and neglected, were exposed to the hazard of perishing with cold and hunger; and thirty missionaries, dispersed throughout the empire, were obliged to repair to Canton, and afterwards to Macao. Yet a considerable number, notwithstanding a strict search, still contrived to find hiding-places, particularly in the mountainous and unfrequented districts of Hou-quang. In 1736, we find the members of the imperial family still adhering to the Christian profession; and the rigour of the government having been insensibly slackened, fresh converts were made,

particularly among the Tartars, including individuals of high rank. These circumstances, however, having come to the knowledge of the enemies of the faith, kindled afresh their active hostility. They made a new representation to the emperor, deploring the extension of this belief among his native subjects, and calling for the most energetic measures to check its progress. A decree conformable to these views was quickly prepared and signed, and the persecution began with renewed vigour. The principal means for securing conformity was caning; and, in several instances, more than 400 blows were inflicted on the unfortunate Christians.*

• Yong-tching was succeeded, in 1736, by Kien-long—an enlightened prince, and of a milder character. The Christians, accordingly, soon found a considerable relaxation in the severity with which they had been treated. Two years after, indeed, a convert was arraigned before the Li-pou, and punished for sprinkling children with magical water (baptism); but the missionaries, having taken the opportunity of making a full statement of their case to the emperor, obtained a decree prohibiting the issuing of placards against the gospel, and ordaining that to bear the name of Christian should no longer subject men to punishment. Under this humane and equitable treatment the new faith again flourished; a college was formed at Pe-king for its propagation; and four young princes became converts to it. The rage of its adversaries was once more roused to the highest pitch. From the ever-hostile quarter of Fo-kien a fresh memorial was sent, representing, in

* *Lettres Edifiantes*, tome xx. p. 2-6; tome xxi. p. 221; tome xxiii. p. 4-70.

stronger colours than ever, the enormities of the new sect, and the imminent danger of its general diffusion. The better judgment and feelings of Kien-long were overpowered by the united voice of the tribunals and great mandarins: a decree, of the same tenor with those which preceded, was sent at once through the fifteen provinces, and all China was in motion against the Christians. According to the disposition of the several mandarins, the measures adopted were more or less rigorous. Generally speaking, the governors proceeded to corporal punishment, to the demolition of the churches, and the destruction of images, crosses, chaplets, and ornaments. Some displays were made of heroic fortitude; yet the missionaries had to lament that a great proportion of the converts yielded to the storm and renounced their profession. Still it was calculated, that though many teachers were driven out of the kingdom, about an equal number had been able to remain concealed. In the capital, especially, they still enjoyed the emperor's protection, and contrived to keep together a large body of proselytes.*

* *Lettres Edifiantes*, tome xxiv. p. 123-169; tome xxv. p. 236-288.

CHAPTER IX.

British Embassies.

Origin and Equipment of Lord Macartney's Embassy—Reaches the Coast of China—Intelligence received at Macao—Voyage along the Coast—Tchu-san Islands—Ting-hai—Voyage through the Yellow Sea—Coast of Shan-tung—Ten-tcheou-fou—Unable to find a Harbour—Visited by two Mandarins—Ships depart—Embassy sails up the Pei-ho—Tien-sing-fou—Tong-tcheou-fou—Entrance into Pe-king—Arrangements for visiting the Emperor at Zhe-hol—The Great Wall—Arrival at Zhe-hol—Introduction to the Emperor—The Imperial Gardens—Chinese Doctors—Festivals—Return to Pe-king—Audience of Departure—Result of the Embassy—Voyage along the Great Canal—Sou-tcheou-fou and Hang-tcheou-fou—Ning-po-fou—Journey through Tche-kiang, Kiang-see, and Quang-tung—Arrival at Canton—Friendly Conduct of the Viceroy—Embassy under Lord Amherst—Its Arrival and Reception—Discussions relative to Court-ceremonies—Its abrupt Dismissal—Return-voyage up the Yang-tse-kiang—Arrival at Canton—General Results.

ALTHOUGH Britain early in the last century had opened an intercourse with Canton, which soon far surpassed that of any other European power, no effort was made to improve it by a mission to the imperial court till 1792, when it appeared desirable to obtain some extension of the limits within which the traffic was confined. The idea is said to have originated with his majesty's ministers Pitt and Dundas, and to have been merely assented to by those at the head of the Company's affairs, without any very sanguine hope as to the result.* However,

* Auber's China (8vo, London, 1834), p. 193.

the embassy was formed on a liberal scale, and supplied with every thing which could render it imposing and respectable. Lord Macartney, a nobleman of acknowledged merit, was placed at its head, having under him Sir George Staunton, Messrs Barrow, Dinwiddie, and other intelligent individuals. The naval equipment consisted of two large vessels,—the *Lion* and *Hindustan*,—accompanied by the *Jackall* brig. They sailed on the 26th September 1792, and on the 20th June, in the following year, came in sight of the *Grand Ladrone*. The group to which it belongs is composed of small islands, whose dark rocky shores are shattered by the continual action of the waves, and which cheer the eye only by a few scattered patches of verdure. Their forms and positions are so broken and irregular, as to suggest the idea of their being fragments disjoined, at a distant era, by some mighty convulsion, from the neighbouring continent. At present they serve chiefly as the retreat of pirates, as their Spanish name indicates. On the same day, the coast of China, here somewhat lofty, appeared in view. At this stage several confidential persons were despatched to *Macao*, where the English factory then resided, to obtain such information or aid as might forward the future progress of the expedition. They learned on their arrival, that the embassy continued to excite a strong and friendly sensation at the celestial court; and that instructions had been sent to all the governors and mandarins along the coast to receive them well, and to supply them with pilots and every thing necessary for safe and easy navigation. The Governor of Canton made earnest application to be enabled to transmit to his imperial mas-

ter an account of the presents destined for him; less, it was charitably supposed, from avarice or idle curiosity, than from a wish to measure the degree of respect in which that prince was held by the British. Yet there was reason to suspect that many leading men at Canton, particularly the Hoppo or chief revenue-officer, secretly deprecated the success of the embassy, which would have the effect of admitting the English trade into other ports, and thereby diminishing the benefit which this city derived from its exclusive possession. Even the Portuguese, low as they were sunk, and though they behaved with great politeness, were understood to cherish still their ancient jealousy against the intercourse of other nations with China. It was deemed advisable, therefore, not to seek for pilots here, but to steer their way for Tchu-san, where they would probably obtain well-qualified guides to the Yellow Sea. They had on board two native interpreters; one of whom, as the critical period approached, was struck with panic at the thought of the heavy penalties denounced by the laws of the empire against those subjects who quitted it, and accepted employment under a foreign power. The other was more intrepid; he trusted to the protection afforded by the embassy, and, being a native of Tartary, his features were not precisely Chinese. He changed his name, put on an English uniform, and prepared to face any danger that might occur.*

Leaving the Ladrones, they arrived at the straits which separate the Chinese coast from Formosa, where they encountered several furious gales, ac-

* Staunton's Embassy to China (3 vols 8vo, London, 1798), vol. i, p. 8.

accompanied with tremendous thunder and lightning, and torrents of rain. The violent monsoons which prevail in those seas, collected as in a funnel between the mountainous coasts on each side, usually render this passage very tempestuous. As soon as the rain began to pour, the Chinese put on jackets, trousers, and hats of flexible reeds, over which the water flowed, leaving their persons perfectly dry. Having reached Tchu-san, their progress was almost arrested by the crowd of boats which assembled to enjoy the strange spectacle. Above 300, wedged as it were within each other, encircled the Lion, and thousands around were employed either in fishing or trade. The Tchu-san Islands are of regular form, with rounded summits, and resting on gray or red granite. Like the Ladrões, they are apparently not formed by river-alluvion, but scooped out from a portion of the continent by the violent action of the waves. They wear, however, a much more inviting aspect, and one called Poo-too is described as a perfect paradise. Its beauties had induced a body of 3000 monks to settle in it, where, besides 400 temples, they had erected dwelling-houses, and formed gardens.

The Lion and Hindostan having found good anchorage, Mr Barrow was sent in the *Clarence* to procure from the governor the promised pilots. He sailed through a multitude of islets,—counting between the Que-san and the great Tchu-san no fewer than 300. One of these displayed a striking proof of Chinese industry, in a spot of ground redeemed from the sea, so small as scarcely to appear worth the labour; being carefully laid out in rice-plots, watered by artificial channels, and manured by peculiar sub-

stances, without any regard to their action on the olfactory nerves. These islands abound with excellent harbours, which, with their central position in respect to Corea, Japan, Formosa, and the neighbouring coast, render them, and the adjacent port of Ning-po-fou, the seat of an extensive trade. The harbour of Tchu-san is so enclosed between islands that the ship seemed as in a lake surrounded by hills; and the sailors could scarcely discover the passage by which they had entered. The governor, on learning their arrival, immediately requested them to come on shore, where he received them most cordially, inviting them to plays and entertainments. He desired a visit of Lord Macartney, which was declined, on the ground of his lordship's anxiety to reach as soon as possible the imperial court. According to instructions, he had provided pilots to conduct the vessels to the next province, where they would obtain guides to that which followed, and so on, till they arrived at Tien-sing-fou. The English, on the contrary, stated that their plan was to stand out to sea, and proceed in a direct line towards their destination. To the governor this was completely a new idea; the course proposed by him was described as that followed by the Chinese in all ages, and therefore undoubtedly the best; besides, qualified pilots were not to be procured except at the great port of Ning-po-fou. But, taking the alarm lest a complaint should be forwarded to court that the embassy had been unable to procure what they wanted from him, he instituted a diligent inquiry; and two men were found who had, though not very recently, made the whole passage to the mouth of the Pei-ho. These persons were ordered forthwith

to go on board the English ships. In vain did the poor fellows throw themselves on the ground, and urge the distress in which such an abrupt departure would involve themselves and their families. The authorities repelled the entreaty ; and our countrymen, though their feelings were touched, could not reject the only means of effecting their voyage. During this negotiation, they found leisure to visit the city of Ting-hai, which was surrounded by walls thirty feet high, that concealed the houses, and were defended at every hundred yards by square towers built of stone. The cannon were few, and in bad order ; but the bows, arrows, pikes, and matchlocks, were in good condition. On a small scale, this town somewhat resembled Venice, being intersected by numerous canals, the bridges over which were steep, and ascended by steps like the Rialto. The houses, however, unlike those of Italy, seldom exceeded one story high, had roofs of plastered tile shaped like tents, with figures of animals and other rude ornaments. The place presented a scene of busy traffic ; all articles were exposed for sale to the utmost advantage ; even coffins were painted with gaudy colours. The men went actively through the streets, while the women, with their hair becomingly plaited and coiled, appeared chiefly in the shops, and at the doors and windows. The small size of their feet was alone sufficient to preclude very brisk motion. The people in general crowded round the strangers with eager and familiar curiosity, without any apprehension from the guard, who in fact made no attempt to restrain them ; and there never appeared the slightest disposition to rudeness or violence.*

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 50.

Resuming their progress, on the 9th July they entered the Yellow Sea, where they may be said to have commenced a voyage of discovery; for there was no record of European vessels having overcome the rigid prohibition against proceeding to the north of Tchu-san. The pilots, notwithstanding their reluctance to embark, afforded every aid in their power; but they were provided only with a small compass, had no charts, and were surprised to see the British ships quitting the view of land, and steering through an unbounded expanse of waters. This great gulf derives its name from receiving the large stream of the Hoang-ho, or Yellow River, so named from the extraordinary quantity of mud brought down by it, with which not only its own stream, but the sea adjoining is deeply tinged. As the spacious keels of the *Lion* and *Hindustan* ploughed the waves, they brought up large quantities of this deposit; leaving in their wake, for nearly half a mile, a streak of yellowish-brown, which caused at first an alarm that they were getting into shoals. On the 14th, the crew of the latter ship descried a small square-rigged vessel,—an event in itself almost as surprising as if a Chinese junk had appeared in the seas of Europe; however, it proved to be the *Endeavour* brig, sent with despatches from the commissioners at Macao. As it drew comparatively little water, Captain Proctor, who commanded, had sailed at a short distance from the shore, where he discovered the low flat island of Tsung-ming, thrown up by the alluvial substances deposited by the waters of the Yang-tse-kiang. He met a number of mandarins in barges, coming by the emperor's orders to welcome the ambassador, and assist in guiding his

course ; but they proceeded on the supposition that his vessel, like theirs, would make a mere coasting-voyage, and never lose sight of land. Hence they seldom went beyond two fathoms' depth, while the *Lion* in less than four would have been aground.

On the 15th, they observed a small cone-shaped island called *Ka-te-noo*, and next day came in view of the bold projecting peninsula of *Shan-tung*, marked by lofty capes,—one of which, named, in honour of the ambassador, *Cape Macartney*, presented the appearance of six pointed peaks. The aspect of the country was mountainous and rugged ; but along the shore extended beautiful and highly-cultivated valleys, with inlets in which the flat-bottomed traders could be securely lodged.



The squadron, on the 19th July, having cleared the extremity of the *Shan-tung* peninsula, which forms the most easterly point of China, began to steer west by north for the Gulf of *Pe-che-lee*, and the entrance of the *Pei-ho*, their intended landing-place. The shore was every where crowded with spectators. After doubling several headlands, they entered the extensive bay of *Ten-tcheou-fou*, where the coast was richly cultivated, though with a background of lofty mountains. The city of that name is one of the first rank, and the ample circuit of its walls conveyed an impression of extra-

ordinary magnitude ; but it was afterwards found that large empty spaces were enclosed within these ramparts. The governor, as soon as he learned their arrival, sent refreshments, and soon followed in person with numerous attendants, among whom the strangers first saw an example of that extreme subordination which prevails in this country. One of them having some information to give to his master, dropped on his knees, and in that posture related the whole,—a homage which the other received as quite regular and natural. Yet this high personage, after the first ceremonial of introduction, became polite and even affable, laying aside all that solemn reserve which has been supposed to characterize a mandarin. As the English were now about to come into direct communication with the Chinese people, the ambassador prescribed a set of rules, by which he earnestly exhorted them to govern their conduct ; premising that they bore at Canton the reputation of being the very worst of all Europeans. This character, we suppose, might have been partly earned by their hardy demeanour, little in unison with that of the people among whom they had just arrived ; but it was of the utmost importance now to make a more favourable impression. These injunctions were so strictly observed that, at the close of the embassy, a mandarin of rank assured Lord Macartney, that the same number of natives, taken promiscuously, would not have behaved so exactly according to his ideas of propriety.*

As the bay of Ten-teheou-fou afforded only indifferent anchorage, the Clarence was sent forward to examine Mi-a-tau. This was found to consist

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 102.

of a group of islands adjoining the shore, where a reef of rocks at one end, along with the neighbouring coast, afforded shelter from every wind except the west; but these rocks were themselves dangerous to approach. Two of the islands, indeed, enclosed a secure bay, capable of containing about 100 vessels; but it had the disadvantage, of which the Chinese were not aware, of affording anchorage only in three fathoms water,—a depth in which the *Lion* and *Hindustan* could not float. Thus disappointed, the navigators were allured by assurances from a pilot of venerable aspect, that they would find a safe harbour, with abundance of water, near the mouth of the *Pei-ho* itself. On the 23d of July, therefore, the fleet began to move in this direction. They sailed on for two days, not without alarms, in consequence of the water repeatedly shoaling so low as six fathoms. The coast to the westward was very flat, distinguished only by trees and buildings, which appeared as if “perched up in the air.” Here Lieutenant Campbell, who had been sent forward in the *Jackall* brig to examine the mouth of the *Pei-ho*, arrived, and reported that there was in this quarter nothing that could be called a harbour, but only a few sandy islands, which might afford shelter from the swell, but not from the winds. The entrance of the river was obstructed by a bar, easily overcome by the flat-bottomed junks; but his brig, of 100 tons, could with difficulty cross it. Soon after his return, a supply of provisions was sent; and as the circumstance of the vessels not being able to pass the bar had conveyed an exaggerated idea of their magnitude, the quantity of every article was enormous.



Chow-ta-zhin.

There were twenty bullocks, 120 sheep, 120 hogs, 100 fowls, 100 ducks, 160 bags of flour, an immense quantity of rice, with various fruits and vegetables on the same vast scale. As long as the embassy was on Chinese ground, every want was thus abundantly and gratuitously supplied. Even some articles of clothing, ordered by one of its members, were furnished, and all payment refused.*

As soon as these arrangements were completed, two mandarins, specially appointed by the court to attend on the envoys, hastened on board to pay their respects. These great persons were in some alarm and agitation, neither of them having ever before been at sea ; yet so anxious were they to per-

* Staunton, vol. iii. pp. 117, 166.



Van-ta-zhin.

form this duty, that they hurried, with a numerous train, into the first junk they could find, though it afforded very poor accommodation. They felt much at a loss, also, how to ascend the steep sides of the Lion, and were dismayed at the expedient of elevating them in a chair by ropes; but finding themselves lodged safely on deck, and then ushered into the spacious and well-furnished cabin, they were greatly pleased. These two dignitaries,—one civil the other military,—were Chow and Van, whose high rank was indicated by *ta-zhin* (great man) affixed to their names. It was more distinctly announced by blue and red globes on the top of their respective bonnets; and in the warrior, by a peacock's feather depending from it. They were both much liked by the English

gentlemen. Chow, the civilian, was a plain, grave, judicious person, rather solicitous to perform his duty steadily than to shine. Van had distinguished himself by his military exploits, and bore the scars of honourable battle. He was tall, robust, and muscular; qualities which, in the rude warfare of this country, still rank high, even in a chief; and his manners indicated a certain consciousness of merit, yet without arrogance. Both these officers were extremely easy and agreeable, showing little of that pompous reserve which had been expected. Feelings very different from those of European etiquette led them to ask a sight of the letter to the emperor, or, at least, a statement of its contents. The presents, too, had always been an object of their eager curiosity; and though Lord Macartney was desirous to reserve the first display of them for the eyes of the Son of Heaven himself, it appeared no longer possible to resist the entreaties of such exalted personages. A list of the articles, which appear to have been of a very judicious description, was therefore produced; though it was added, that no hope was entertained of thereby making any material addition to the treasures with which the imperial throne was already surrounded; and that the intention was simply to afford a specimen of whatever was striking in European science, and most exquisite in the productions of art or industry. Among these last was an orrery, showing the movements of the earth and all the heavenly bodies, calculated for upwards of 1000 years; which was, in fact, considered the most perfect piece of mechanism of its kind that had ever been constructed in England. There was also a powerful reflecting telescope, and a pair of magnificent globes; in the ce-

lestial one the colour of the ground was azure, while the stars and the lines dividing the firmament were of gold and silver. An air-pump and several chronometers, on the most improved principle, were added ; likewise an instrument displaying the action of the mechanical powers. So distinguished a conqueror as his majesty, would, it was expected, view with interest patterns of the different descriptions of ordnance, muskets, swordblades, and other military weapons ; and there was a complete model of a first-rate ship of war, showing every part of that stupendous structure. Exhibitions were also made of the various articles of British manufacture ; and the effects of heat were illustrated by two burning-glasses, one of them the largest and most complete ever moulded in Europe. A series of paintings represented cities, churches, castles, gardens, as well as battles, horse-races, and other national amusements ; lastly, portraits were given of eminent individuals ; the whole conveying information respecting the state of the arts and the aspect of society in this quarter of the world. These different particulars, when explained to the mandarins, obtained their highest approbation.*

Preparations were now made for immediate embarkation on the Pei-ho. The Chinese had provided about thirty junks, which, in their form, exhibited a curious contrast with the towering masts and complicated rigging of the European ships. It was arranged that the interval should be employed by Sir Erasmus Gower in surveying the almost unknown coasts of Japan, with part of the Philippines and other oriental islands, and in ascertaining whether a commercial intercourse might not be opened with

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 125-133.

those regions. On the 5th August, amid cheers from the sailors, who manned the yards, the ambassador went on board one of the brigs, while the baggage was placed in the junks; though, after passing the bar and arriving at a place named Ta-cou, he found a barge fitted up for his reception. It somewhat resembled a passage-boat on a Dutch canal; had an ornamented sofa in the saloon; and was furnished with glass panes, while those of his suite had the windows supplied only with a species of oiled paper. These last were sixteen in number; some of which were about eighty feet long, spacious and commodious, yet constructed of timber so light, that they did not draw above eighteen inches of water.

Here the embassy were visited by the viceroy, who had travelled from his residence at Pao-ting-fou,—a distance of 100 miles. He was infirm and tottering with age; yet his manners were dignified and polished, and he made himself extremely agreeable, passing slightly over those tedious formalities of which strangers in China have so often complained. On returning the visit at his lodgings in the principal temple, the strangers were introduced with less satisfaction to another high personage, “The King of the Eastern Sea,”—an object of idolatrous worship which seems to be sanctioned by the government. Several images of him were seen in brilliant shrines of porcelain, sitting on the waves, holding a magnet in one hand and a dolphin in the other; while his beard flowing in all directions, and his agitated locks, seemed to personify the troubled element over which he presided.*

On the 9th of August, the flotilla sailed from

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 168.

Ta-cou, but made only a slow progress against the stream, through a country so level, that the masts and sails appeared often as if moving through the fields. At every town or village, all the inhabitants were mustered,—the men and elderly dames close to the water's edge, the younger females peeping over walls or through gates. During the night, the river presented a gay scene, reflecting variegated lights from lanterns hung at the mast-head of each vessel, and by their form and size denoting the rank of the passengers. A sumptuous table was maintained at the expense of his imperial majesty; though the food was not exactly suited to an English palate. There was no bread; its place being supplied by boiled rice, and by wheat made into a pulp, dried to the consistence of dumpling. The dishes were all what we call dressed, being minced or cut into small portions, and highly seasoned; and when the Chinese cooks undertook to roast or boil a joint or entire fowl, they executed the task very indifferently. They often served up soups made of their favourite luxuries of birds' nests and sharks' fins, which it would have been very ungracious to refuse, though only a large admixture of spices could render the dishes at all palatable. The fields were covered with heavy crops, seldom of rice, but mostly of the *holcus sorghum*, growing to the height of ten or twelve feet; and the huts were no longer built of mud, but of ill-burned brick. The river, for a considerable space, was bordered with pyramids or stacks of salt, about fifteen feet high and from 200 to 600 feet long. These, amounting to upwards of 200, were calculated to contain not less than 600,000,000 pounds, which Mr Barrow supposed sufficient for the annual

supply of 30,000,000 of people. This commodity, which is monopolized by the government, is brought from the southern provinces, where sea-water is evaporated by the heat of the sun.*

The embassy at length arrived at Tien-sing-fou, a very large city and great commercial emporium, situated at the junction of two rivers, by which it communicates with the capital, the ocean, and, by means of the Great Canal, with the noble rivers and provinces of the south. It was estimated, that the length of this town must be nearly equal to the distance from Millbank to Limehouse, the utmost limits assigned to London; and they were inclined to believe the assertion, that it contained a population of 700,000.† This vast multitude, animated by the usual curiosity, exhibited a singular spectacle, when they poured forth to view the strangers. Having gone on shore in some pomp, the travellers found their friend the viceroy, who by land had accompanied their progress, and also another high character, the legate, on whom they were now chiefly to depend. This personage formed the first exception to that urbanity which the Chinese functionaries had hitherto displayed. Amid the formalities of outward politeness, it soon became evident that he was imbued with an inordinate degree of national pride, and regarded the British with utter contempt. Through his interference a ceremony was required, which the prudence of the viceroy had before omitted: a recess was pointed out in the audience-hall, where the majesty of the emperor was supposed to reside, and to it they were required to do obeisance. They hesitated not to comply, by making a profound in-

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 180.

† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 290.

clination of the body. They were gratified, however, to learn from him, that the monarch was then at his country-palace of Zhe-hol in Tartary, where he wished to receive the embassy. They would, in proceeding to court, not only see a new country, but even pass over the Great Wall,—that celebrated work, of which Dr Johnson has said, that the grandson of the man who had seen it would have cause to boast. The legate, however, showed his obstinacy, by insisting that the presents should also be conveyed over the mountains, where the most delicate of them must inevitably have been broken in pieces; and it was only through the zealous mediation of the viceroy that he agreed to their being deposited at Pe-king.*

The embassy were visited at Tien-sing-fou by a number of great men, whose manners appeared to resemble those of the old French noblesse in urbanity, frankness, and easy familiarity, through which, however, their extravagant pride was very discernible. Amid all the forms of politeness, occasion was purposely taken to show the slavish awe which the lower Chinese entertain for their superiors. The interpreter, too, who had accompanied the envoys from Canton, never translated any of their speeches without altering the plainest terms into others of the most humble and servile import. But his own nerves were at length so agitated, by continued appearances before august and awful personages, that, though he had promised to himself the highest gratification from viewing the emperor and the capital, he determined to renounce these prospects, as well as the promised emolument, and

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 189.

return in peace to his own city. The English perceived that they were now under a more strict and jealous surveillance, and found it to arise, not merely from the legate's character, but from the report of transactions which had taken place on the frontier of Thibet, and were supposed to threaten war between China and Britain. The embassy laboured under the peculiar disadvantage of being wholly ignorant of the circumstances, and consequently unable to give the requisite explanations; they could only declare their thorough conviction that the wrongs imputed to the Indian government would, on inquiry, prove to be unfounded.*

The expedition made a slow progress up the branch of the Pei-ho leading to Tong-tcheou-fou, the port of Pe-king. Meantime, Chow and Van were sedulous in their attentions, and were still very agreeable. The legate, too, visited them almost daily, but in a pompous and ostentatious manner. He travelled partly by land in a sedan-chair, richly ornamented with silk tassels, and preceded by a numerous band, proclaiming aloud his dignity.

On the 16th August, the yachts came to anchor at the port just named, about twelve miles from Pe-king, the river there ceasing to be navigable for vessels of their depth of water. They were accommodated in a spacious temple and monastery, founded some centuries ago by a devotee of the sect of Fo; all the priests, except one, being obliged to remove and make room for them. The baggage and presents, in the course of a single day, were taken out of the thirty vessels, and lodged in two temporary structures of bamboo, each upwards of 200 feet long.

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 195-231.

The weather was then extremely hot, the thermometer rising in the shade to 86 degrees; and the gentlemen of the embassy were not a little alarmed at seeing scorpions and scolopendras in their beds, and even on their persons; but it was found that these animals, when unmolested, seldom did any harm.*

After a few days spent at Tong-tcheou-fou, they began their journey towards the capital. The presents, many of which could not be carried except on men's shoulders, and the baggage, which had accumulated to a superfluous amount, required for their conveyance ninety small wagons, forty hand-carts or barrows, 200 horses, and about 3000 porters. The ambassador and three of his principal attendants travelled in sedan-chairs, the others on horseback, the servants and privates of the guard in rude caravans. Their road was along a level and magnificent avenue, having a granite pavement twenty feet broad in the centre, and in many places a border of trees. The party breakfasted at a village-inn,—very unlike those of England,—of which the apartments were small, neither elegant nor decorated, but where every sort of refreshment was provided in abundance. They saw no indication of an approach to the greatest city in the world, till they entered a suburb, which presented a busy scene, though the inhabitants did not show the same eager curiosity as elsewhere, but, after their attention had been diverted for a moment, speedily resumed their ordinary occupations. After journeying a quarter of an hour, they entered a gate surmounted by a watch-tower several stories high. The walls were forty feet in height, diminishing from the breadth of

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 255.

twenty feet at the ground to twelve at the bottom of the parapet, and several horsemen could ride abreast on the ramparts, which were ascended by slopes from the inner side.*

The interior of this great capital presented a scene new and striking to European eyes. It had, in comparison, a gay, airy, and lightsome appearance. Instead of narrow streets bordered by rows of high houses, the way led through spacious avenues, upwards of 100 feet broad, having on each side mansions, seldom more than one, never above two stories high. The shops were painted with brilliant colours, and had before them rich flags, painted lanterns, and long labels. The crowd collected to see them was swelled by a funeral procession, by mandarins with numerous trains, and by multitudes assembled round auctioneers, singers, jugglers, and storytellers. The latter took their theme from the passing strangers, and dwelt upon the presents brought by them, which were represented as altogether surprising and supernatural. They were said to include an elephant not larger than a monkey and as fierce as a lion, and a cock which fed on charcoal. These reports roused in an extraordinary degree the curiosity of the people, who, abandoning their occupations, pressed forward in crowds, so that the soldiers were obliged to brandish long whips, but in a good-humoured manner, often merely striking the ground. Other streets, composed entirely of private dwellings, presented less gayety and bustle, each being enclosed by a wall which concealed from view the door and outer court. The grandest object was the imperial palace, which

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 288.

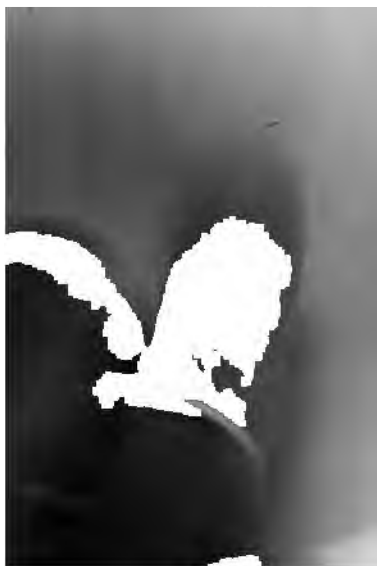
stood within a wide enclosure, where the earth had been studiously piled into hills, often of steep ascent, leaving little lakes ornamented with artificial islands. On these eminences were the apartments and summer-houses of the emperor, adorned with lofty trees. The embassy went through another spacious suburb ; but, after all, their impression was, that Peking was a less splendid and wonderful sight than report had led them to anticipate.*

They were next conducted to a place of residence, closely adjoining the palace of Yuen-min-yuen, and surrounded with grounds highly ornamented. As preparations were now making for the journey into Tartary, there came under discussion the grand question of Ko-tou, the nine prostrations, with the head beating the ground,—that mark of debasing homage, exacted from all who were introduced into the presence of the Son of Heaven and Light of the World. To this humiliating ceremony the ambassadors of all the European states had hitherto submitted, except those of Russia. It had, indeed, been determined not to allow an obstacle of this nature to defeat the important objects of the embassy. The affair, however, was extremely delicate, as this observance would doubtless be proclaimed throughout Asia as an acknowledgment that George III. was a vassal to Kien-long. On flags, attached to the different vessels conveying the mission, had been uniformly written,—“ Ambassador bearing tribute from the country of England.” Disagreeable as this lying announcement could not fail to prove, it would have been impossible to notice it without making its removal an indispensable condition of

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 298.

proceeding: so that it was thought most prudent to see as if they saw it not, or at least had never asked or received any interpretation. Under these circumstances, something seemed necessary to mark the usual prostration as an act of personal, not of national homage.—some accompaniment indicating a reciprocal dignity in the English sovereign. Lord Macartney started the somewhat odd proposition that a portrait of George III. being placed in an apartment of the palace, a mandarin of suitable rank should perform before it the same homage which was required from his lordship towards his imperial majesty. This proposal, almost beyond expectation, was rather graciously received by the proud and lofty legate, who, however, wished that the opinion of the court should be previously obtained; but this was overruled by the Governor of Yuen-min-yue. The presents were now examined, with the view of selecting those fit for conveyance across the moun-

tains. Some objects, unluckily, made rather an unfavourable impression. Six small brass cannon of exquisite workmanship and firing several times in a minute, excited the deepest suspicions in the mind of the legate, though he attempted to assure that Chinese ordnance was generally effective; he, however, requested that they should be delivered up to the government. A coach, he also, excited some suspicion, though he assured that the Chinese were not so superstitious as the Europeans thought them.



by a
walls



September 1793. He travelled in his own carriage, —the first time, it was believed, that such a vehicle had rolled over the plains of Northern China. Several mandarins who came to ride in it, were first alarmed, then delighted, with its height, its easy, light, and rapid motion. For about twenty miles, the country consisted of an almost boundless plain, profusely covered with grain and useful plants ; while numerous dromedaries were conveying to the capital the furs and other products of Tartary. The ground then became more elevated, and assumed a bolder aspect ; hills rose over hills, till, after penetrating through a pass about a mile broad, they entered a wide plain, whence rose detached eminences of various form and aspect, among which the tobacco-plant was abundant. As they ascended, it became necessary to drag the carriage empty over the rugged roads ; the scenery grew wild and romantic ; goats and horses, in a state of nature, scampered among the hills ; and men were seen scaling precipices, in order to reach spots fit for cultivation. The population, which was now decidedly Tartar, was not so dense. This race displayed a more robust frame, but their countenances were less intelligent, and their manners less courteous. The distant mountains began to assume a lofty aspect ; and, on a nearer approach, there was seen ranging up and down their steepest declivities a continuous line or ridge. This object became more and more distinct, till it presented the appearance of a rampart furnished with lofty towers ; and the party became convinced that they had in view that wonder of the eastern world, the Great Wall of China. This is undoubtedly a stupendous work. The Romans built two walls

across Britain ; several have been reared in different parts of Asia, to defend its civilized tribes against barbarous neighbours ; but all these together would not nearly equal this celebrated barrier. At present, indeed, it is little regarded ; since the Mantchoo Tartars, against whom it was erected, have become masters of the empire, and the countries on its opposite sides are incorporated into one. Some of the slighter appendages have given way under the neglect thus occasioned ; but the main body, extending 1500 miles, remains as entire as when it was constructed, three centuries before the Christian era. By the help of some small breaches, Captain Parish was enabled to examine the interior structure. The main body consists of earth, with retaining-walls of masonry on each side, and covered with a platform of brick, above which the building is continued to form the parapet. The entire height is twenty-five feet, the thickness at the bottom twenty-five, at the top fifteen ; so that a coach and six could drive along it. At every interval of about 100 yards is a tower of thirty-seven feet in height, and forty feet square at the bottom.*

After passing this prodigy of human labour and perseverance, the embassy entered the ruder region of Northern Tartary, which, from its great elevation, bears almost an Arctic character. The rugged hills showed on their southern side low pines, stunted oaks, elms, and other trees ; while the northern declivities bore little except thorny shrubs. The great majority of the inhabitants were Tartars, who, though united with China under one sovereign, enjoyed their native laws and institutions. The goitre,

* Staunton, vol. ii. p. 347-383.

that mysterious scourge of cold and elevated tracts, was found prevailing to such an extent, that, according to Dr Gillan's calculation, it afflicted one-sixth of the inhabitants. As in other countries, it affects the intellect, often reducing the sufferers to a state of complete idiocy; but they are treated with tenderness, and are even imagined to bear a sacred character.* After a continued ascent by a path bordered with huge masses of granite, the mountains were seen to recede, and leave open the fertile valley of Ge-hol or Zhe-hol, enclosed by little hills of varied form, and watered by a river whose sands contained many particles of gold. They were well accommodated in a spacious range of edifices, agreeably situated on the slope of an eminence.

The ambassador, immediately on his arrival, was waited on by the legate, who returned to him the memorial that was supposed to have fixed the ceremonial of reception, but which he said he had never delivered. This was not very credible; and information was soon obtained, that the Colao, or vizier, the second person in the empire, had been persuaded by the Viceroy of Canton, who had newly returned from the Thibet war, that the footing of reciprocity which it implied between the sovereigns of England and of the celestial empire was wholly inadmissible. This officer, a Tartar by birth, had been promoted from the lowest rank by the emperor, who, seeing him standing on guard at one of his gates, was struck with his handsome countenance, and, finding him a man of talents and education, raised him step by step till he was second only to himself. The monarch, however, did not resign to him the entire

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 3-5.

direction of affairs. On one occasion, giving credit to a false accusation, he disgraced him for a fortnight ; but, on being undeceived, immediately loaded him with additional honours. He had even given one of the princesses in marriage to his son ; and an alarm spread through the court-circles, that he intended to exercise in the young man's favour his privilege of nominating a master to the empire. This rumour excited a strong sensation, and one individual was so much affected, that he wrote to the sovereign, urging him to remove the apprehension by immediately naming a successor. This interference, which in Europe would be considered only an act of indiscretion, was in China deemed a state-crime ; the offender was put to death, and the monarch announced, that his heir would never be known till after his demise or retirement, the latter of which would take place when he had reigned sixty years.*

The first interview with the colao was one of mere ceremony ; but that officer soon employed two mandarins, along with the legate, to press in the most urgent manner the performance of the ko-tou. Even personal threats were not omitted ; but as Lord Macartney persisted in his refusal, he was at length asked, what was the utmost testimony of respect which duty to his master would allow him to pay. He named that usually shown to his own sovereign, of dropping upon one knee, which was received with a very unexpected degree of satisfaction ; and notice was soon given, that the emperor, moved by his own good sense, and satiated, perhaps, with the adoration of the world, had consented thus to receive the ambassador. That such a proposal, however, should

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 27-29.

be made, and, much more, agreed to, excited a general surprise throughout the court, and was understood to be strongly censured by some ; but, in the mean time, it conveyed to all a high idea of the importance of the embassy.*

The 14th of September, three days previous to his majesty's birthday, was fixed upon for the reception. The arrangements were made according to the simplicity of Tartar manners, which Kien-long, in this his native seat, preferred to the more artificial pomp of China ; and the audience was to be given soon after the dawn of day, in a garden. On repairing to the spot, the English found assembled a considerable number of distinguished individuals, who had arrived while it was yet dark, considering it respectful to remain long in waiting for the emperor. They were all of illustrious rank : princes of the blood ; the envoys of tributary monarchs ; and mandarins, each displaying at least a dark-red button, the sign of the second order ; while from the bonnet of several depended three peacock's feathers, marking the highest honour to which a Chinese can aspire. One spacious tent, elegantly though not gaudily ornamented, had been prepared for his majesty, and in a conspicuous part of it was placed the imperial throne. Around were several smaller tents for the embassies, the princes, and one for the private use of the monarch. Soon after day-break, a mingled sound of voices and musical instruments announced the approach of the emperor, who appeared from behind a wooded hill, as from a sacred grove, preceded, according to a somewhat barbarous usage, by many flattering attendants, proclaim-

* Staunton, vol. iii. pp. 15-18, 22-24.

ing aloud his virtues and power. He was seated in a kind of triumphal car, borne by sixteen persons, and encircled by guards, officers of the household, flag and umbrella bearers, and musicians. His dress was of plain dark silk, with a velvet bonnet, in form somewhat resembling that of the Scottish Highlander; a large pearl in front of it was the only jewel or ornament. He immediately mounted the throne by the front steps, consecrated to his sole use. The colao was present, but it was observed that he never spoke to the emperor except on his knees. All the other mandarins were ranged round the throne according to their respective dignities; and the British had a conspicuous place on the left, which in China is the side of honour. Some attention to dress had appeared necessary among a people where its arrangement is a matter of state. A suit closely fitted to the shape is considered here neither dignified nor decorous; Lord Macartney, therefore, threw over his richly-embroidered velvet coat the long mantle of the order of the Bath, with its star and diamond-badge. Sir George Staunton wore his scarlet gown, as Doctor of Laws at Oxford.

The important moment being at length arrived, the ambassador took the splendid golden box adorned with jewels, which contained the letter from the king; then, ascending the few steps that led to the throne, and bending on one knee, he presented it. Kien-long received him very graciously, expressing his satisfaction at the testimony of esteem and goodwill given by his Britannic majesty, in sending to him an embassy, with a letter and valuable presents. He, on his part, entertained corresponding sentiments, and hoped that harmony would al-



Lord Macartney's Page introduced to Kien-long.

ways be maintained between the two nations. He presented in return a gem, considered peculiarly valuable, being upwards of a foot in length, and curiously carved into the form of a sceptre. Then, according to court usage, he exchanged personal presents with the members of the embassy, and having his notice called to a youth, his lordship's page, who could speak Chinese, presented him with a silk purse used by himself, and thence esteemed a very high compliment.*

* The annexed Plate, from a drawing taken on the spot, represents the scene at this moment, which had appeared to the artist to afford the most striking point of view under which it could be exhibited.

The reception of the mission was considered to be in every respect highly honourable. Ambassadors from Pegu, and Mohammedans from the vicinity of the Caspian, were also introduced, and performed the ko-tou with the deepest humility, but without obtaining equal notice. A splendid banquet was then served in the Chinese fashion upon small tables, one for every two guests; and the viands, consisting of meat and fruits in great variety, were piled in pyramids over each other. The emperor, who sat at a separate table, ate heartily, and sent several dishes that were before him to the English. Having inquired the age of the British sovereign, he expressed a wish that it might equal his own, which was eighty-three, though, from his apparent health and vigour, he seemed scarcely sixty.*

The next attention shown by his majesty consisted in inviting Lord Macartney to view the extensive gardens, or rather pleasure-grounds, which surrounded the palace; and his lordship was much gratified to find, that the colao was in waiting to attend him. This satisfaction, however, was much alloyed by the presence of the Viceroy of Canton, who had commanded in Thibet, and had there contracted hostile feelings towards our nation, which he made no attempt to disguise. The gardens, according to the Chinese taste,—certainly purer than that which long prevailed in Europe,—were not laid out in alleys or parterres, but consisted of a great extent of ornamented ground, in which the scenes of nature were presented in all their simplicity, and the hand of art was studiously concealed. Hills, woods, and valleys, were

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 24-44.

arranged in a graceful though irregular manner ; and various animals, which had been collected, were not confined in a menagerie, but roamed at full liberty ; advantage being taken to combine the wild grandeur of rude, with the softness of cultivated scenery. The finest objects were grouped round an extensive and winding lake, the margin of which, and the eminences above, were studded with small palaces or pavilions ; these were filled with curious specimens of mechanical skill,—carvings in wood, cut pebbles, and paintings which displayed both the beauties and defects of the pictorial art in China. But what the mandarins most admired were certain very ingenious automata, which, by the help of springs and wheels, imitated the motions of men and animals ; these, having been newly introduced, excited immense applause. While the ambassador was expressing a polite admiration of some which had formerly composed part of Cox's Museum, the Thibet general boastingly asked, if he had ever seen such things in England, and was much mortified on being told, that they had been imported from that country.*

The envoys were greatly concerned to learn, that their friend the colao, in consequence of the fatigues of this excursion, had suffered a relapse in a severe complaint to which he was subject. Dr Gillan being requested to attend him, found his indisposition to proceed from rheumatism, which he had caught among the mountains of Tartary, combined with hernia or rupture. The Chinese doctors, after feeling the pulsation in various parts of his body, had concluded that the disorder arose from a malignant vapour which, insinuating itself into the frame, and

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 54.

flying from one part to another, had caused these distressing symptoms. With the view of allowing this air to escape, they had made deep punctures with gold and silver needles, which caused exquisite pain without affording any relief. The patient was much surprised when Dr Gillan declared himself satisfied with feeling one pulse, provided he had the means of knowing the symptoms of the malady and the state of the diseased parts,—information which the native practitioners treated as altogether superfluous. The good sense of the colao, however, soon enabled him to see that this last was a rational course of proceeding; and the other, by applying his hand at once to the temporal artery and to that at the ankle, convinced him that they beat exactly in unison. He therefore confided himself to the care of the English physician, whose judicious practice soon relieved him from the most urgent symptoms.*

The presentation was quickly followed by the birthday-festival, which was continued several days with the greatest pomp. The tributary princes, and the mandarins from every part of the empire, to the number of 12,000, who had been assembled for this great occasion, performed the most humble prostrations. The troops on parade were reckoned at about 80,000. The exhibitions were not those of archery or horsemanship, in which the Tartars might have been supposed to delight; they were entirely Chinese, and not of the more refined dramatic class, but merely such displays as were calculated to strike the senses. The music was marked by imperfections peculiar to the country; but the danc-

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 55-61.

ing was graceful and pleasing; while great skill was displayed in tumbling and posture-making, the tricks of legerdemain, and performances on the slack-wire. The fireworks, in which, from a box raised on high, numerous paper-lanterns issued in various shapes, exhibiting beautifully-coloured flames, showed an art then unknown in Europe, and which excited the admiration of our people. A volcano was also represented, throwing up into the air volumes of fire.*

Among other dramatic performances, a very singular pantomime, supposed to represent the marriage of the Ocean and the Earth, elicited great applause: "The latter exhibited her various riches and productions, dragons and elephants, and tigers and eagles, and ostriches, oaks and pines, and other trees of different kinds. The Ocean was not behind hand, but poured forth on the stage the wealth of his dominions, under the figures of whales and dolphins, porpoises and leviathans, and other sea-monsters, besides ships, rocks, shells, sponges, and corals, all performed by concealed actors, who were quite perfect in their parts, and performed their characters to admiration. These two marine and land regiments, after separately parading in a circular procession for a considerable time, at last joined together, and, forming one body, came to the front of the stage, when, after a few evolutions, they opened to the right and left to give room for the whale, who seemed to be the commanding officer, to waddle forward; and who, taking his station exactly opposite to the emperor's box, spouted out of his mouth into the pit several tuns of water, which

* Staunton, vol. iii. pp. 72, 73.

quickly disappeared through the perforations of the floor."*

Soon after this celebration, his majesty determined on returning to Pe-king; and the commissioners, on the 21st September, set out before him. The road was divided into three compartments, one of which, reserved solely for imperial use, was kept perfectly clean and smooth, being watered by cisterns placed at proper distances. Another parallel line, also neat and commodious, was for the mandarins and chief officers, and the embassy was privileged to use it. The third section could not be called a road, being a mere track formed by the tread of passengers. A few of the officers, in again crossing the Great Wall, felt some desire to take a second view; but they were surprised to find, that all the breaches by which they had formerly entered were carefully stopped up with stone and rubbish. Many similar instances occurred, in which the Chinese, while professing an eager wish to gratify curiosity, contrived some oblique mode of defeating it. This jealousy had pressed particularly hard on those gentlemen who had been left at Pe-king. All the missionaries, except one, were prevented from seeing them, on the futile pretext, that the servants of those reverend persons might steal their property. Several endeavoured to relieve the tedious interval by walking on the wall which surrounded their residence; but, as they thereby came in view of some of the female inhabitants of the neighbouring houses, high umbrage was taken, and they were obliged to desist. The arrival of the ambassador,

* Barrow's Travels in China (4to, London, 1804), p. 203.

therefore, was a complete jubilee to this part of the mission. The emperor came somewhat later ; and Lord Macartney, though labouring under illness, found it necessary as a point of etiquette to go out to meet his majesty ; but nothing passed except complimentary messages from the opposite compartments of the road.*

The monarch, for some time after his return to the palace of Yuen-min-yuen, was employed in examining the presents, and was on the whole highly pleased. A day was then fixed for a grand audience, in which the answer to his Britannic Majesty was to be delivered. The interval was solemn, and not unattended with anxiety. The embassy had been received with the highest courtesy, and even magnificence ; they had experienced a decided preference over those from great Asiatic kingdoms, which had stooped to humbler forms of homage ; yet, there were not wanting certain grounds of unfavourable anticipation. The emperor was surrounded by personages of high rank, who did not even throw a veil over their rooted enmity to the English. The general from Thibet, imbued with the feelings of discontent which had thence arisen against Britain, and with jealousy of her vast and rapid acquisitions in India, openly denounced her as a dangerous power. As Viceroy of Canton, too, though his district flourished by the English trade, he was adverse to any extension of its limits. The legate, again, always unfriendly, had on their account suffered a deep degradation ; for the emperor, being informed that he had, contrary to orders, omitted to visit the ambassador on board the *Lion*, announced as his punishment, that he

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 88-139.

should exchange the opaque white for the transparent blue button, and instead of a peacock's feather, should wear that of a crow. Yet, amid this humiliation, the friendship of the colao enabled him still to retain his situation and influence at court; and what he suffered on account of the strangers rendered him the more desirous to injure them. These various causes had evidently acted powerfully, even on the intelligent mind of the Tartar chief himself, who refused to receive the presents which Lord Macartney offered to him. It was not, therefore, without gloomy presages that the ambassador, on the day appointed, repaired to the palace. After passing various spacious courts, traversed by canals, which were crossed by bridges of granite with balustrades of marble, they came to the foot of the stairs leading to the hall, where the imperial letter, wrapped in rich silk, was laid on an ornamented chair. It was then conveyed in pomp up stairs, followed by the great men, both English and Chinese, who saw it placed in the middle of the hall, for the purpose of being sent to the ambassador's residence. The emperor did not appear; but the colao, with the same politeness as before, led them through the different apartments of the palace, which were found to resemble, but with superior magnificence, those they had seen at Zhe-hol.*

Lord Macartney could not with propriety open the letter, and no information was given to him of its contents; but various circumstances left no room to doubt that, though couched in polite terms, it granted none of the privileges with a view to which the embassy had been fitted out. His lord-

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 151.

ship would now willingly have prolonged his stay a short time, in the hope of effecting some favourable change. But, though no hint was given, he understood, that after the delivery of the letter his departure was considered as a matter of course. The permanent residence of an ambassador is an arrangement quite foreign to Chinese conceptions; they viewed him only as a person who came with presents on occasion of a solemn festival, at the conclusion of which his duty was accomplished. The expense of the embassy, too, which must have been very considerable, afforded probably a motive, though unacknowledged, for looking forward with satisfaction to its termination. To have remained in the face of circumstances thus indicating the propriety of withdrawing, would have compromised the dignity of the mission, and probably excited a feeling unfavourable to the views of future alliance. Lord Macartney, therefore, intimated his wish to set out, and the Chinese government showed the utmost alacrity in forwarding his preparations. Despatch, indeed, was the more important, as the Pei-ho and other northern rivers, no longer fed by the melting of the snows, were falling, and would soon be extremely shallow. Chow and Van, who had from the first been guides to our countrymen, were, at the particular request of his lordship, allowed still to attend him; but under pretence of doing honour to them, though really, as was suspected, from motives of jealousy, Sun-ta-zhin, a mandarin of the very first rank, was added to the retinue. The colao took a courteous leave, though without showing any disposition to concede more favourable conditions.*

* Staunton, vol. iii. pp. 163, 177.

rice, the fields now presented extensive plantations of mulberry for feeding silk-worms. In three days after the passage of the Yellow River, they came to the still mightier stream of the Yang-tse-kiang, two miles broad, and swelling in waves like the sea. The adjoining shores were not flat, but diversified with rising grounds, beautifully adorned and cultivated. One ornamented island, shooting up amid the waters, presented almost a magic scene. Numerous vessels of every description moving to and fro, the continued succession of cities, towns, and villages, rendered this superior to any part of China they had previously seen. Their route did not lead through Nan-king, the greatest city and the ancient capital of the empire ; but, after returning into the line of the Great Canal, they passed through Sou-tcheou-fou, reckoned the most beautiful town in the kingdom. The streets, generally well-built and decorated, were arranged like those of Venice, along the banks of numerous canals branching off from the great one ; the people, well clad in silk, appeared cheerful and prosperous ; even the women were considered handsomer than those of other cities. The inhabitants, as might be expected, lamented the policy which had induced the emperor to transfer the seat of government from these beautiful regions to the naked plains on the frontier of Tartary.*

After sailing about a hundred miles farther, the party came to a broad basin, at which the long line of the canal terminates. Between it and the mouth of a large river, which traverses the province of Tche-kiang, and falls into a bay communicating with the ocean, was the city of Hang-tcheou-fou. As the

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 255.

canal has no communication with the river or sea, all the goods it interchanges with them must be trans-shipped at this place, which thus carries on an extensive trade, and in population very nearly equals Pe-king. Its beauty, so celebrated by Marco Polo, when, under the name of Kin-sai, it was the capital of the southern empire, did not strike our countrymen with such admiration as that of Sou-tcheou-fou. The houses were low, and the streets narrow ; yet the men were in general gaily dressed, had the appearance of wealth, while many of the shops equalled in splendour those of London. See, the adjoining lake, adorned with rising grounds, villas, and pagodas, and covered with numberless pleasure-boats, presented an enchanting scene.*

During this long navigation, the embassy derived great satisfaction from their constant intercourse with Sun-ta-zhin, their illustrious conductor. He was a person of enlarged and cultivated mind, well skilled in Chinese and Mantchoo literature, and never travelled without a library. From his communications with the envoys, he became convinced that the sinister designs imputed to them were chimerical, and that they really had no other object than to obtain commercial facilities. His letters went far to dispel the prejudices instilled into the emperor, who, though he did not actually grant any new privileges, engaged to secure them in the full possession of those already enjoyed, and to redress the wrongs inflicted by the Viceroy of Canton. That officer was even removed, and his place supplied by the Governor of Tche-kiang, a near re-

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 273.

lation of the sovereign, and described as a person from whom mild and equitable proceedings might be confidently expected. During the whole voyage the travellers were also attended by their friends Chow and Van, who paid an unremitting civility, yet carefully avoided visiting them along with Sun-ta-zhin, to whom, though themselves *ta-zhin*, or great men, they were so much inferior that they durst not have sat down in his presence.*

In consequence of some mistake, the ships belonging to the embassy were found to have separated, —the Hindostan lying at Tchu-san, and the Lion at Canton. It was judged most convenient, that the presents and part of the train should be embarked in the former vessel, while the leading members should proceed to the station occupied by the other. Sun-ta-zhin joined the party going to Tchu-san, committing Lord Macartney to the friendly guidance of the new viceroy; and having reached the place just named, he took leave, with a hearty shake of the hand in the English manner, after giving handsome presents, and granting permission to prepare a cargo. But the limited assortment of goods in this comparatively small port, and the indisposition of the natives to take any return unless in hard cash, rendered this commercial license of very little avail.†

Meantime the ambassador, accompanied by the new viceroy, proceeded from Hang-tcheou-fou, ascending the great river which waters Tche-kiang. The country on its banks was more diversified than any hitherto traversed, rising into hills, and sometimes even mountains which seemed more elevated than any in Great Britain. The eminences were

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 178.

† Ibid. p. 361.

clothed with wood, in which were conspicuous the tallow-tree with purple leaves, the spreading camphor, whose timber is used in China for the most important purposes, and the lofty thuya or arbor vitæ. Many valleys on the upper part of the river were covered with sugar-cane, and here, too, they saw the tea-plant growing wild.*

After reaching the highest point to which the stream was navigable, the embassy disembarked, and proceeded by land across the chain of mountains which forms the western boundary of Tche-kiang. As horses in this district were scarce, and the roads, though well kept, too narrow to admit of carriages, they were conveyed in bamboo-chairs borne by the peasantry; but some of them, ashamed of being carried by men less vigorous than themselves, chose rather to walk. This tract, though rude and sequestered, was populous, and the soil as carefully improved as in the finest parts of China. They did not travel a mile without seeing a village; and every spot not consisting of mere rock was under cultivation. Every mountain-face not absolutely perpendicular was formed into successive terraces, so that culture was carried to the very summit; and where the cliffs were too steep for this process, the earth was stripped off, and spread upon some more level surface. After a short land-journey, they embarked on another stream flowing north-west; and were guided through different channels connected with the Po-yang lake, the general receptacle of the waters of this part of China, whence they are poured into the Yang-tse-kiang. A great part of this territory is so low and swampy as to be incapable of drain-

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 295.

ing; and it was occupied by a scanty population, living almost entirely in boats, and subsisting on fish and waterfowl. At this point the party landed again, in order to cross the high chain which divides Kiang-see from Quang-tung. The lofty peaks, viewed from beneath, were for some time mistaken for clouds, and a careful estimate proved them to be 8000 feet above the sea. A large mass had with immense labour been cut down from the highest part of the road, which rendered the passage much less laborious. These steeps, when not wholly composed of naked rock, were clothed with plantations to the very summit. On passing this barrier, a splendid view opened of undulating ground covered with the richest produce, and an almost boundless plain beyond. Immediately on reaching the lower country they embarked on the Pe-kiang, a large river, which was to lead them to Canton. Its banks were bordered by calcareous hills, often rugged, and shooting into fantastic forms. Very large rafts or floats of timber were seen in their progress from the mountain-districts to the central provinces. The approach to this exclusive seat of English trade was indicated by certain words of our language heard on board of the vessels, and by large quantities of goods that were evidently intended for our market. As they drew near the end of their voyage the hilly borders of the river subsided, and there appeared on each side a plain bounded only by the horizon, irrigated by numerous canals, and adorned with all the riches of Chinese cultivation. They made their entry into the city with pomp, in large and highly-ornamented barges, provided by the viceroy with the view of showing to the inha-

bitants the honourable light in which he wished our countrymen to be regarded.*

During the whole of the journey from Hang-tcheou-fou, the intercourse with this great officer had been most agreeable. Though of still higher rank than Sun-ta-zhin, he showed no foolish pride, conversing familiarly with Chow and Van, and causing them to sit in his presence. He professed, and really appeared, to be actuated by a sincere desire of serving the British. He even communicated an intimation from his imperial majesty, that the repetition of a similar embassy would be acceptable; suggesting that the year 1796, when he should complete the 60th year of his reign, might be a suitable occasion. But advantage was not taken of this encouraging notice.

The ambassador, after remaining a short time at Macao, set sail on the 17th March 1794, and arrived at Portsmouth on the 6th September following.†

Twenty years elapsed without any farther attempt being made by this country to open an intercourse with China. In 1814, differences of rather a serious nature arose between our agents and the administration at Canton, in which it is candidly admitted that the latter had some ground of complaint. For instance, our ships of war had exceeded their rights, by attacking enemies' vessels in seas which that people might justly consider as their own. The native authorities ultimately yielded, chiefly in consequence of a threat to withdraw altogether the British trade from their port. These dissensions, however, suggested to the Company the expediency of opening a direct communication with the imperial court, and

* Staunton, vol. iii. p. 355.

† Ibid. p. 465.

of thereby making an appeal from the capricious proceedings of the local government. These views they communicated to the ministry of George the Fourth, then Prince Regent, offering, if his majesty would consent to sanction an embassy, to defray its expenses. No hesitation was made in acceding to their wishes; Lord Amherst was placed at the head of the mission; and it was arranged that, on his arrival at Canton, he should add, as second and third in rank, Sir George Staunton and Mr Elphinstone, who occupied the highest situations in the factory, and were distinguished by their long experience in Chinese affairs. His lordship set sail on the 8th February 1816, and arrived at the Lema Islands, near Macao, on the 10th of July; but Mr Elphinstone being absent, Mr Ellis, who had gone out in the view of such an event, took his place under Sir George Staunton. The envoys obtained the attendance also of Messrs Morrison, Manning, Toone, and other individuals intimately acquainted with the country, and conversant with its language. The viceroy showed symptoms of an unfriendly disposition, in which he was seconded by the Portuguese at Macao; but a letter was received from the emperor, giving them assurances of the most cordial welcome. They proceeded on their voyage on the 13th July, and, following the route of Lord Macartney, arrived in the end of the same month at the mouth of the Pei-ho. After some interval, they were waited upon by three mandarins; two of whom, Chong and Yin, indicated their high rank by wearing one a blue and the other a red button; the third, Quang, could display only a crystal one, but, holding the place of Chin-chae or imperial commis-

sioner, he took precedence of both his colleagues. The attentions were somewhat tardy and cold, compared with those shown to the former embassy ; but every thing was finally done that politeness required, and all the necessary arrangements were made for their conveyance to Pe-king. They admired, as their predecessors had done, the great dexterity displayed by the Chinese workmen in lading and unlading the vessels. In approaching Tien-sing-fou, Mr Ellis, the historian of the voyage, was particularly struck by " the gradual crowding of junks till they became innumerable,—a vast population,—buildings, though not elegant, yet regular and peculiar ;" above all, by the amazing multitudes who flocked to view the strangers. At Tien-sing-fou the officers intimated that the stay of the mission was understood to be very short, as the emperor was preparing to set out for his Tartar palace at Zhe-hol, and had no expectation that they would accompany him. On their hinting a doubt whether such an arrangement indicated a very friendly disposition, their apprehensions were declared to be groundless, and the rank of their conductors was referred to as a proof of his majesty's good wishes. Here, too, the discussion respecting the kotou, which had early arisen, came to a sort of crisis. As considerable anxiety was felt at home to conciliate the Chinese monarch, a discretionary power had been vested in the ambassador to consent to this ceremony, if any material benefit appeared likely to arise from its performance, or a great evil from its omission. Lord Amherst and Mr Ellis, therefore, on finding the mandarins extremely urgent upon this point, felt a good deal inclined to concede it ; but Sir George Staunton, and most of the gentlemen

resident at Canton, were strongly of opinion that the respectability of the English nation in the eyes of the Chinese would suffer to such an extent, as would greatly overbalance any advantage that could possibly be derived from yielding. The discussion was rendered very painful by the mandarins asserting, that Lord Macartney had actually performed this reverence to Kien-long, and that the fact was recorded in the annals of the empire; they had even the effrontery to appeal to Sir George Staunton, who had been present, for the truth of their assertion. Lord Amherst judiciously avoided drawing from Sir George a direct contradiction; but replied, that the reverse being stated to him in his official instructions, the inquiry was no longer open to him, and he was bound to act as if it were true. He then proposed the usual obeisance practised in England, of kneeling upon one knee, not objecting to its repetition nine times. He was requested to make an exhibition of this ceremony, that the mandarins might judge of its effect; but, as such a rehearsal would not have been quite conformable to his dignity, his lordship's son performed the act of homage to his father, and afforded considerable satisfaction. The immediate cause of this discussion was an official banquet, to which mark of imperial bounty the Chinese urged that the ko-tou should be addressed, as if it had been the emperor himself; but Lord Amherst could not resolve even to kneel before the table, and would only consent to bestow nine bows upon it. This was acquiesced in, and the embassy was then conducted up the river to Tong-tcheou-fou. The question respecting the ko-tou was again renewed with increased warmth; being car-

ried on chiefly by Ho, a new attendant of high rank, whom Mr Ellis calls duke, though there could be nothing in China corresponding to that hereditary dignity. He urged it in a violent and lofty tone, and on grounds which rather tended to defeat his object; for he chose to assert, "that, as there is but one sun, there is only one Ta-hoang-ti; he is the universal sovereign, and all must pay him homage;" the very pretension, in fact, on account of which the ceremony was declined. At another time he said, his lips quivering with rage, "they must either comply or be sent back." At length a lower tone was taken, and it was merely intimated, that the performance or neglect of the ko-tou must make the difference between a good or a bad reception. This was a very serious view of the question; and Lord Amherst requested Sir George and the gentlemen from Canton to engage in a final deliberation on the subject. They did so; and the result was a solemn conviction, that compliance would be attended with an injury to the interests of the Company much greater than any favour to which it could lead. The ambassador then announced to the mandarins his irrevocable determination; and to his surprise, these persons, who perhaps had been encouraged in their urgency by certain symptoms of indecision, seeing his resolution immutable, acquiesced, and agreed that no more should be said on the subject.*

As soon as the English had landed, the Chinese used all means to hasten their arrival at court.

* Journal of the Proceedings of the late Embassy to China, by Henry Ellis, Third Commissioner of the Embassy (2 vols 8vo, London, 1818), vol. i. p. 65-262.

They set out on the afternoon of the 28th August and travelled that evening and the whole night round the walls of the capital, without being admitted into the city. They were then not a little surprised to be ushered soon after daybreak into an apartment of the palace of Yuen-min-yuen, where the emperor was at that moment giving audience. The room, inconveniently small, was crowded with princes of the blood, mandarins of every button, and other spectators of less dignity, who behaved in a very disorderly and uncereemonious manner. They were gratified, without much respect, their eager curiosity, and Lord Amherst had reason to complain, that they gazed at him rather as if he had been a wild beast than the representative of a powerful sovereign. In this unpleasant situation, the crisis occurred which decided the fate of the embassy. Chong came out and announced that the emperor was pleased to admit them to an immediate audience. This invitation came very unseasonably; the ambassadors, being exhausted with the long journey, in dishabille and quite unprepared for so important an interview. He desired that these circumstances might be stated to his imperial majesty, and a delay solicited. Chong, however, continued in the most pressing manner to urge compliance. Ho also soon came out, when finding entreaty ineffectual, he even made an attempt to drag the nobleman in by force. This was very properly opposed; and Lord Amherst, persisting in his refusal, was finally conducted to his lodging. This firmness, which, though annoying, was not meant to indicate personal disrespect, proved immediately fatal to the objects of the embassy.*

* Ellis, vol. i. p. 276.

The mandarins in this despotic government are generally made responsible for the success of the affairs intrusted to them, and no slight excuses for failure are admitted. Hence they had been most eager to obtain his lordship's compliance, and, dreading the consequence of his refusal, had recourse to their wonted system of deception. As only some palpable apology would be listened to, they informed the emperor that the ambassador had been seized with a sudden illness, which rendered him unable to appear before his imperial majesty. The monarch readily received the excuse, and delayed the interview till a future period. But, unfortunately, he had the kindness to send his chief physician to attend the supposed invalid. That learned personage, on examining his patient, soon discovered that he laboured under no malady whatever, and that there was nothing in his bodily condition to have prevented him from obeying the imperial summons. The sovereign, on receiving the medical report, immediately ordered the embassy to leave Pe-king without a moment's delay. In vain did the English urge the necessity of a short repose after so many fatigues; the mandarins were indefatigable in pressing their departure, which took place at four in the afternoon of that very day. They travelled now under a complete eclipse of the royal favour, as well as of that respect with which they had been hitherto treated. The triumphal arch reared in honour of them at Tong-tcheou-fou was found completely demolished, and the house where they had been lodged in state was shut up. Even a beggar, who had risen in testimony of reverence to Lord Amherst, was desired to sit down.

In the course of their navigation along the canal, however, an edict was transmitted to their conductors, in which the emperor complained of having been deceived; and, though he did not recall them, gave orders that they should be treated with greater attention.*

The route of Lord Amherst, as he returned, coincided for a considerable space with that of Lord Macartney. On reaching the Yang-tse-kiang, however, instead of crossing and re-entering the Great Canal, the embassy sailed up the river more than two hundred and eighty miles. They were astonished at the grandeur of this stream; for, so broad and deep was its channel, that when agitated by a brisk gale, it was tossed in waves like the sea, causing a sickness as severe as had ever been experienced on that element. The opposite shores were bordered by ranges of hills, sometimes rising into mountains; but the country generally, which was populous, appeared covered with rich cultivation. The party stopped for a few days at Nan-king, when they found that great capital fast decaying, in consequence of having so long ceased to be the seat of empire. Yet the view commanded from an eminence, of its towers, temples, and ornamented hills, spread over a circuit of thirty miles which its walls enclosed, was extremely imposing. Though the Porcelain-tower was seen only in the distance, an impression was received, that instead of the splendid material which its name indicates, it is composed only of a species of white tile. Similar marks of decay were observed in the other cities, except Ngan-king-fou, which appeared in com-

* Ellis, vol. ii. p. 4.

parative prosperity, containing many respectable private houses, and shops richly stored with Chinese fabrics. The people, in general, complained of declining wealth, and beggars were numerous. On leaving the Yang-tse-kiang, they entered upon the Po-yang lake, which empties its waters into that river. This wide expanse, with towns rising from its banks, above which ascend mountains covered to the summit with the most varied vegetation, and crowned with pagodas, presented a succession of magnificent scenery. On reaching the fine city of Nan-tchang-fou, which stands near the point where the Kan-kiang falls into the lake, they followed the track of the former embassy, and arrived at Canton on the 1st January 1817. They were disappointed to find that the gleam of returning favour which had shone upon them in the course of the journey was completely overcast. The viceroy had received an edict, bitterly reproaching them for the disrespect shown to his majesty, and instructing him to treat them with coldness, and even to give them a reprimand. Again, however, another letter arrived, in which the emperor threw the whole blame on his ministers, on some of whom he inflicted the most degrading punishments.*

Such was the unfavourable issue of this mission ; since which, no attempt has been made to open a communication with the court of Pe-king. It was now remarked by those who reflected on the subject, that to the masters of so great an empire, the commerce of the English was a very small object, while any application for its extension roused that jealousy which was naturally caused by the vast enlargement

* Ellis, vol. ii. pp. 197, 198.

of our empire in the East. In Canton, on the contrary, and the provinces immediately adjoining, the trade with this country forms a very important concern, and affords subsistence to numerous individuals. Its suspension, therefore, would inevitably cause a diminution of revenue, accompanied by popular discontent, and perhaps commotion. For these evils, the governors, according to Chinese practice, would be made responsible, while their own importance would be diminished by the cessation of the traffic. Although, therefore, they may be disposed in particular instances to practise extortion and oppression, yet, when the question comes to respect the actual termination of the intercourse, they will ever be found ready to make concessions, and even sacrifices, in order to avert such an issue.

CHAPTER X.

Recent Dutch Embassy.

Dutch invited to send an Embassy of Congratulation—Titzing and Van Braam employed—Their Arrival and Reception at Canton—Departure—Ascend the River—Passage of the Mountains—Thence take the Land-route to Pe-king—Rugged Territory—Journey through Kiang-nan, Shan-tung, Pe-che-lee—Hardships on the Road—Rude Means of Conveyance—Arrival and Reception at the Capital—Audience of the Emperor—Court-entertainments—Departure from Pe-king—Return—Disappointment at Sou-tcheou-fou—Journey through Tche-kiang.

ALMOST immediately after Lord Macartney's mission, another was sent by a different European power, which, as it followed a new route, and exhibited the Chinese court and character under a peculiar aspect, is worthy of special attention.

On the 2d April 1794, M. Van Braam, head of the Dutch factory at Canton, was visited by a distinguished mandarin, accompanied by the chief of the hong-merchants. They stated, that they were commissioned by the tsong-tou, or viceroy, to mention that, as the sixtieth anniversary of his imperial majesty's accession was now approaching, it would be extremely grateful if the Hollanders, whose intercourse with China had commenced at so early a period, would send an embassy of congratulation. This gentleman, who was led to cherish sanguine

hopes from so unusual a proposal, undertook to communicate it without delay to the commissaries-general at Batavia, entertaining no doubt of their concurrence. He accordingly took the earliest opportunity of informing them by two English vessels, which were to pass that port on their way to Bombay; and they at once determined to comply with the suggestion, nominating M. Isaac Titzing, a member of the grand council, head of the mission, with M. Van Braam as his second in authority.*

With such despatch was the expedition fitted out, that about the middle of September it arrived at the entrance of the Bocca Tigris. On the 24th of that month, the hop-po, or mandarin presiding over the revenue, came on board, and, after the first civilities, began to inquire very particularly, whether they had any other motive in coming than that of presenting their respects to the emperor. They replied very positively that they had not. Yet the question was repeated three several times, and they were at length obliged to affirm upon their honour that they spoke the truth. It was stated, that if they had any farther object it must be instantly declared, that the sovereign might be apprized of it before their arrival at court. The hop-po probably dreaded that, like the English, they meant to petition for having other ports opened to their trade,—an accommodation which would have been directly opposed to the interest of the Canton authorities. He then requested a sight of the letter to the emperor, and at once condemned its external appearance, as being much too plain. He urged also the necessity of breaking it open, that the requisite improvements might be made,

* Van Braam's Embassy, vol. i. p. 1-4.

and the contents imparted to his imperial majesty. This request, so foreign to European ideas of propriety, and which Lord Macartney had steadily resisted, was at once acceded to ; while the ambassador, admitting that the version made at Batavia might be even defective, agreed to the expediency of having it revised. On the same day, he landed at the factory ; and on the 27th, several of the principal hong-merchants repaired to his apartments, when the letter, dictated by Van Braam, was by them translated into Chinese. It was afterwards put into the hands of other mandarins, to render it more worthy of the royal perusal. Doubtless they added a variety of terms expressive of humble and abject submission ; but the chief envoy was passive on every point. Great scandal was also taken at its being written on paper, while his own commission was embodied on parchment ; but Van Braam contrived to satisfy them, by taking a large skin of that substance, with a painted border, on which he pasted the epistle. It was next put into a satin purse, on which was a dragon embroidered in gold ; and finally enclosed in a gilded box, also decorated with a representation of the same animal.*

The tsong-tou was at first absent, being employed on one of those grand surveys or examinations which form a leading feature of Chinese policy ; but, on the 3d October, he sent four of the principal mandarins to visit the ambassador. These persons put some very puzzling questions to him, desiring particularly to know why the letter had not been signed by the monarch, and why it had not the seal of the four chief officers of Batavia, but only that of a

* Van Braam, vol. i. p. 6-16.

body of merchants. On these subjects explanations were given, which are said to have been satisfactory, though it is somewhat difficult to discover how they could be rendered so. Some evil-disposed individuals, it appears, had industriously circulated a report that the chief of the embassy was not a great nobleman, and even that his master was not a king,—assertions which the narrator chooses to treat as malignant falsehoods, though they were undoubted facts, and such as, unfortunately, stripped the mission of all dignity in the eyes of Orientals.*

The *tsong-tou* continued to send polite messages by persons of distinction, but without visiting or inviting the Dutch, till the 13th October,—the day fixed for their state-reception. They were then ushered into a pagoda, with a spacious saloon at the entrance, containing a number of seats arranged in a semicircle, in the centre of which himself and his chief officers were to sit, with the strangers on their right. These last were then conducted to an altar, on which was placed a tablet having the names and titles of the emperor written in letters of gold; and cushions being spread, they were desired to make the nine prostrations before it. They seem to have resolved to hesitate at nothing by which there was any chance of attaining their ultimate object. This homage, which Lord Macartney avoided paying even to the imperial person, they performed, in all its humiliation, to the mere letters of his name. The viceroy then addressed them in a friendly manner, received the letter destined for himself, and expressed his satisfaction when they declared their readiness

* Van Braam, vol. i. p. 17.

to set out for Pe-king on the first notice. After a refection of tea, soup, and birds' nests, they were again led to the altar, and required to enact the ko-tou afresh. A superb banquet followed, at which, however, neither the tsong-tou nor any of the high functionaries deigned to appear. The ambassador afterwards expressed a wish to enter the city, and pay his respects to the viceroy, the governor, and the hop-po. This was granted, but with a mortifying restriction on the part of the first-mentioned officer, who lamented that Chinese etiquette would only allow him to send an inferior mandarin to receive them at the gate of his palace. He assured them, it is said, that he had received Lord Macartney in no other manner; which was so far from being true, that he exchanged visits with that nobleman on the most familiar footing. It is therefore evident, that he regarded the present mission as composed of personages decidedly inferior in rank.*

The Dutch were now busied in preparing the presents, which appear to have been neither so valuable nor so interesting as those provided by the British embassy. They had brought only a few articles from Batavia, and purchased the rest at Canton under the direction of the hop-po, with the stipulation that a certain sum should not be exceeded. Of the gifts, four large mirrors seem to have been the most costly. At midnight, on the 13th November, the emperor's answer was received. It was very friendly, and expressed a particular wish that the ambassador should arrive before New Year's Day, when he would be shown all the pomp of the court, introduced to the assembled

* Van Braam, vol. i. p. 26. Staunton, vol. iii. p. 372.

princes and grandees, and amused with the feasts and exhibitions of the season. The Chinese officers now urged the most active despatch ; but it required the utmost exertions of Van Braam to complete the preparations by the 22d. On the 20th, they obtained their audience of leave, when the viceroy seems to have treated them with more than usual respect. He regretted the hardships they must endure from travelling at such an advanced period of the year, but assured them he had made every possible arrangement to promote their comfort during the continuance of the journey ; and, in withdrawing from the banquet and games, he professed that he retired for no other reason than that they might enjoy these at greater liberty. On this occasion, the imperial letter, deposited on a small altar, was carried in pompous procession on a kind of handbarrow, during which the Dutch, imitating the natives, remained on their knees, and at the conclusion performed the full ceremony of prostration.*

On the 22d, the embassy was embarked in upwards of thirty vessels, of which only twelve were occupied by the Europeans ; the remainder being filled by the attendant mandarins and their trains. During the following night, they passed the city of Fo-chan, said to be as populous and flourishing as Canton itself. On the 23d, they breakfasted at San-choui-hing-taui, at a short distance from San-choui, which Van Braam, who contrived to obtain a glance of it, describes as an old and decayed, though evidently an extensive place. The shallowness of the stream, the sand-banks, and the opposing current, rendered it impossible to proceed, without being laboriously tracked

* Van Braam, vol. i. p. 23-35.

by coolies. On the 24th, they began to ascend above the plain of Canton ; and the land, from its greater elevation, being no longer fit for rice, was observed to be covered with different species of wheat and plantations of sugar-cane. In the morning of the 25th, they made their way through a gloomy pass, where the river flowed between lofty eminences of perpendicular rock, which scarcely allowed space for the trackers. High mountains now appeared, especially to the westward ; and in the evening, they went through a similar ravine, almost equally formidable. The banks here were bordered only by low ridges, in the intervals between which, or on mounting to the top of them, they saw a fine country, admirably cultivated, and much resembling that around Utrecht. They soon after passed five remarkable hills, called the Five Horses' Heads, and saw a number of others, which presented the most singular and picturesque forms they had ever beheld. The utmost possible despatch was still employed, and the Chinese bargemen displayed great industry, taking only a quarter of an hour to their meals, and scarcely any sleep. On the 28th, they reached Chao-tcheou, where the diminishing channel of the river rendered it necessary to remove into vessels of about half the size, of which they required, as a matter of course, almost double the number. This trans-shipment renders the city just named the seat of a very great trade, and it is, in point of magnitude, nearly equal to Canton. Even these smaller boats, though scarcely drawing more than a foot of water, were tracked with difficulty, and at last repeatedly touched the ground. On the 2d December, having arrived at Nan-hiong-fou, the embassy landed, and proceeded to ascend the lofty moun-

tain-barrier which separates the province of Quang-tung from that of Kiang-see. They were struck, as the English mission had been, by its steepness, its great height, and by the magnificent plain discovered from its summit. It was night before they reached the other side ; but the commander of the escort having supplied torches, and a guard of troops to aid the palanquin-bearers, they arrived in safety at the large city of Nan-ngan-fou. Here they embarked on the Kan-kiang, which, flowing to the northward, conveyed them in the direction of Pe-king. Descending the stream, they now proceeded with greater rapidity, though still exposed to danger, occasioned by the vessels beating against the sharp stones, with which the whole breadth of the river is filled. In fact, the boat of their principal conductor was stranded, though happily without serious damage. One part of the course was truly formidable, from the number of pointed rocks, which left only a narrow channel through which the flotilla could be guided. After escaping these hazards, the natives sought, by striking gongs and burning gilt paper, to testify their gratitude to the presiding genius of the place. They next passed through a fine country, in which were the large cities of Kan-tcheou-fou and Ki-ngan-fou, but observed little of either, except the crowds who were attracted by curiosity.*

The embassy stopped opposite to Nan-tchang-fou, the capital of Kiang-see, whence, by the rivers and Great Canal, they might have had a continuous navigation to Pe-king. With a view to despatch, however, as it was considered essential to reach that city in twenty-eight days, they quitted their ves-

* Van Braam, vol. i. p. 37-37.

sels, and proceeded by the shortest route. This course was attended with much hardship; but it allowed them to survey some parts of China which have not been seen by other Europeans.

Their way led at first through the province of Kiang-see, and then along the most easterly part of that of Hou-quang. The whole of this tract presented an aspect common to the greater portion of the Chinese empire,—extensive plains diversified only by gentle hills, and both under high cultivation. Numerous villages and some towns were passed, among which the most considerable was Kieou-kiang-fou, situated on a branch of the Yang-tse-kiang. The crowds here assembled to view them were immense, including many females, whose persons were considered pleasing, and even beautiful. Generally, in this district, their complexions, instead of the usual pale yellow, displayed a bloom rivalling that of the rosy damsels of Europe.*

From Hou-quang the envoys passed into Kiangnan, and traversed nearly the whole of its western frontier. But this extensive province, the pride of China, watered by the two great rivers, and displaying in its eastern tracts the most luxuriant fertility, is bordered on this side by a range of sterile mountains, many of which, at this late season, were covered with ice and snow. This region included extensive wastes, consisting only of sand and heath; yet it afforded many proofs of the power of Chinese industry in overcoming even the most discouraging obstacles. The hills were terraced to their very summits, on which reservoirs were kept for watering them; others were clothed with oaks and similar

* Van Braam, vol. i. p. 94-102.

trees. Even the most desolate places were relieved by highly-cultivated and beautiful valleys ; and wherever there was a spot even six feet broad fit for the plough, that instrument was employed.*

From Kiang-nan the travellers advanced into the western part of the province of Shan-tung. The high mountains which traverse that part of the empire were visible only in the distance, and the road lay in general between ploughed fields. The villages were poor ; and the cities, though enclosed by a wide circuit of walls, had in numerous instances only a small part of the interior built upon. Marks of decay visible in many of them, particularly at Ho-kien-fou, were imputed to a recent inundation. Little or no improvement was observed by the strangers after entering Pe-che-lee, till they came to the grand avenue, where an immense throng of wagons, horses, mules, and dromedaries, announced the approach to the imperial capital.†

During the whole of this journey, from the time when they disembarked at Nan-tchang-fou, the embassy had to encounter the most grievous hardships and privations. While to Lord Macartney's people every luxury was furnished in profuse abundance, the Dutch had great difficulty in procuring the most common necessities. They do not seem to have fully penetrated the cause of this mortifying neglect ; but it may be observed, at the same time, that while Chinese water-conveyance is commodious, and by it all state-journeys are performed, the provision for travelling by land is extremely scanty. There are no convenient carriages

* Van Braam, vol. i. p. 116.

† Ibid. p. 152-174.



Sedan-chair.

like those of Europe, and in many places not even a road on which they could be used. The only tolerable vehicles are sedan-chairs ; and these, borne by coolies or porters pressed into the service and paid at a very low rate, are neither skilfully nor zealously managed. Of the bearers, on this occasion, so many were required for the conveyance of the presents, which proceeded in advance of the embassy, that very few were left for the assistance of the members themselves. In these unfrequented tracts, too, the carriers appear to have been under very imperfect subordination ; for frequently at the appointed hours they either disappeared, or refused to go forward till allowed higher pay. At the different places where the Dutch gentlemen halted, the mandarins and governors regarded their wants with a degree of coolness which seems to prove, that no very strict injunctions had been received from court relative to their comfort or accommodation. They were lodged in miserable inns,

and repeatedly obliged, without supper, to sleep on the bare floor. These hardships grievously afflicted Van Braam, who several times persuaded the ambassador to stop, before the appointed end of the day's journey, at places where there would be time to prepare food; although he lamented that the certainty of reaching Pe-king in due time was thereby endangered. As the sedan-chairs became more and more incommodious, a promise was made, that as soon as they reached Shan-tung they should be furnished with litters; but on arriving, they were supplied only with three or four clumsy carts, with no-



Chinese Travelling-cart.

thing to sit on, except a little straw. The chiefs of the mission rejected these vehicles, though assured that they were used by mandarins of the first distinction in the province; but the gentlemen of their suite were obliged to be content with them, as no better could be obtained.*

Amid these privations, the embassy had consoled themselves with the assurance, that as soon as they entered the metropolitan province of Pe-che-lee, they would meet with comforts fitted to banish the recollection of all their sufferings. It was therefore most

* Van Braam, vol. i. p. 149.

mortifying to find their accommodations becoming still more miserable, aggravated by the extreme severity of the cold, which resembled that of an arctic region ; while from its increasing rigour they had very imperfect means of defence. For two nights before their arrival at Pe-king, the greater number were obliged to seek repose in the carts. Even after entering the suburbs of the capital, they were told that the gates were shut ; and they could find lodging nowhere but in a kind of stable, where they were obliged to sleep on the bare floor. In reviewing this journey of nearly 1000 miles in thirty days, in wretched vehicles, and under the severities of the climate, they felt grateful to Providence that their health remained unbroken ; and, in fact, they had little ground of complaint, except such as might regard the weight and size of their persons, which, no doubt, had undergone a very sensible diminution.*

On the 10th January, they entered Pe-king, which made on them a similar, though somewhat less favourable impression than upon the English. At length they reached the hotel destined for their reception, and now hoped that they would be established in a comfortable home. They were, however, considerably dismayed, on being requested to remain some time upon the street in their little carts, the rooms being still unswept, and every thing in confusion. As an apology for this unprepared state, they were told that they had not been expected till some days later ; so that the harassing rapidity with which they had posted served no other purpose but to render their arrival unpleasant. When, however, with the aid of their own exertions,

* Van Braam, vol. i. p. 183.

the small apartments and scanty furniture which compose a Chinese mansion were put in tolerable order, the residence was found not inconvenient; and as it was too late to prepare a dinner, a variety of dishes were sent from the imperial table. But the mandarin, on whom afterwards devolved the care of providing victuals, supplied them in very scanty portions and at long intervals; and they were thus obliged, without merit or inclination, to lead a most abstemious life. This deficiency was not imputed to the emperor, but to the inferior officers, who had resolved to fill their own pockets at the expense of the strangers; and Van Braam observes, with rather an excess of charity, "Would not every one try to avail himself of such an opportunity if it came in his way?" It must be remembered, however, that the English embassy fared very differently; and we suspect that the neglect of the Dutch to assert their own rights and dignity was the main cause why they were so unfavourably treated.*

On the following morning, the mission had a sturgeon upwards of twelve feet long, and weighing two hundred pounds, sent to them from the emperor, with the intimation that this was a high honour, and such as had not been bestowed on the British. Soon after they received, not without surprise, a notice that his imperial majesty wished to see them next day. They endeavoured to have this audience postponed, on the plea that, as their baggage had not arrived, they had no dress suitable for such an occasion; but were answered, that the sovereign wished to see themselves, not their clothes. On the 12th, therefore, at five in the morning, they were put

* Van Braam, vol. i. p. 180-209.

into carts, and escorted to the palace, which, to their surprise, they found in the vicinity of their hotel. They were ushered into a very small and mean apartment, crowded with mandarins and ambassadors from Corea, Thibet, and other countries, who sought to gratify their curiosity so eagerly and uncereemoniously, that the Hollanders were obliged to change their position about twenty times. On other occasions, they were received in apartments equally plain and crowded, where servants, mingling with their masters, pushed every one aside in order to obtain a view of the strangers. They were lost in astonishment, and asked themselves,—“Is this the palace of the greatest emperor of the East? Are these the people governed by the Li-pou or Board of Ceremonies, whose every motion and every address is fixed by statute?”—“I observed,” says Van Braam, “what I so little expected to see, that nothing but my own eyes could have convinced me of its reality.” This strange absence of ceremony, confirmed by Lord Amherst’s observation, is certainly not of Chinese origin, but was probably introduced by the Tartars, who, ruling at court, chose to indulge the rough familiarity of their own manners. The smallness and paltry appearance of the rooms seem to have been general throughout the palace; magnificence being confined to the grounds, the exterior wall, and the halls of state. But Lord Macartney, who had his audience in an open tent, and afterwards in the great saloon of the imperial residence, does not seem to have had an opportunity of remarking this deficiency.*

The Dutch were farther amazed at the intimation, that they were not to be received by the emperor

* Van Braam, vol. i. p. 185-192. Staunton, vol. iii. pp. 30, 36, 149.

in any apartment whatever, but on his way into one of the gardens. After being kept two hours in expectation, they saw him issue from the gate in a palanquin lined with silk, and carried by eight bearers. As he drew near the station which they had been desired to occupy, the ambassador, according to instructions, knelt down, holding over his head the gilded box which contained the letter ; and when it was delivered by him, performed the ko-tou in full solemnity. Kien-long received him very graciously, inquiring into the age of his prince, his own, and whether he did not suffer from the cold. He then proceeded, and crossed a frozen pond on a sledge ornamented with gilded dragons. The strangers were led, or rather dragged along by the mandarins, with a rapidity that in Europe would be considered extremely uncivil ; but this was viewed by them only as a testimony of zeal and attention. They found breakfast prepared in an apartment of the palace so miserable, that in any other circumstances they would scarcely have deigned to enter it. They were afterwards called to view an exhibition of skating by the Chinese, which, as it seemed, was performed so clumsily, that, on approaching the emperor, they could not turn, but were obliged to fall flat on the ice to avoid running against him. After this followed a display of skill by the Dutch, whose easy and dexterous movements excited great admiration. They afterwards waited on the first and second ministers, whom they did not hesitate to salute in a kneeling posture. They were informed, and seem to have implicitly believed, that their persons and address had given satisfaction to these officers, as well as to the emperor. Nothing, indeed, could exceed their

obsequiousness. Kien-long having sent a bag with grapes for Van Braam's cold, that gentleman made no scruple, on being informed that such was the etiquette, to throw himself prostrate, and perform the ko-tou before this small donation ; and he afterwards embraced an opportunity of paying the same profound homage to shaddocks, pomegranates, and apples.*

Notwithstanding these humiliations, and their boasted favour at court, they soon found that the strictest watch was kept over all their proceedings. They were absolutely confined to their residence, and no article was allowed to be taken in or out without undergoing the severest scrutiny. Even their native servants, from the moment they entered the hotel, were never allowed to quit it. The Dutch were particularly anxious to hold some communication with the European missionaries, who cherished on their part a similar inclination ; but an opportunity was in vain sought to send even a note to them. One day, after an audience of the prime minister, Van Braam felt himself taken by the arm and led into an adjoining room by a person who proved to be a Portuguese clergyman. The envoy had scarcely time to say how desirous he was for an interview, and to put into his hand a note prepared for such an occasion by M. de Guignes, when he was violently pulled away, and a moment after he saw the writing in the hands of an attendant mandarin, by whom it had been wrested from the priest. The author of the note was afterwards minutely interrogated as to its contents, which the Chinese had been unable to interpret ; and it was not until he protested

* Van Braam, vol. i. p. 189-230.

that it related wholly to private concerns, that he was promised an interview with one of the missionaries.*

During the following days, the embassy were entertained in the palace at a succession of festivities, and as Kien-long was always present, they had frequent opportunities of performing the ceremony of prostration. They complain very grievously, however, that, notwithstanding the extreme rigour of the season, these entertainments began always at dawn; and being expected to arrive two or three hours previously, they were obliged, amid cold and darkness, to await his majesty's arrival. The amusements consisted chiefly of tumbling, tricks, and buffoonery, some of which were performed with sufficient dexterity; yet, on the whole, they were of so low a cast as to make them remark, that the objects which delighted his imperial highness would, in Europe, have scarcely attracted the attention of the populace at a country-fair. They could not but wonder, while the monarch was elevated to the skies, to see the man thus sunk in tasteless ignorance. At the chief banquet, forty-eight small dishes were piled in rows over each other, on the top of which were two copper basins with legs of mutton, so dressed as almost to disgust them with the same food ever after. The only viands which they could prevail upon themselves to taste were the fruits and sweetmeats. One morning, the emperor sent to them some fragments of animal food in such a state as would have made them be rejected by the meanest pauper in a European hospital; the bones were half picked, and some even bore the marks of the teeth by which they had been gnawed; but they were inclined to believe that these

* Van Braam, vol. i. p. 215.

might have been in the hands of the sovereign himself, in which case, to finish what he had begun was, according to Chinese ideas, the highest honour that could possibly be conferred.*

During the course of these entertainments, the ambassadors were favoured with a view of the extensive grounds belonging to the imperial residence of Yuen-min-yuen, and the various edifices by which they are adorned. The mean ideas at first induced by the smallness of the rooms were considerably elevated by this display. They admired particularly the fine architecture and rich decorations of the temples, filled with numerous idols, some of which displayed colossal dimensions. All were dedicated to Booddhism, or the religion of Fo, which, as a Tartar, the sovereign himself openly professed. Astonishment was also felt at the labour which must have been employed in forming artificial lakes and rocks; some of the latter had been conveyed in one entire mass, thus giving to a tame and level surface a bold and picturesque aspect. The palaces and pavilions, indeed, consisted only of a labyrinth of small apartments, or rather cabinets, similar to those already observed; but such as were immediately occupied by the emperor were kept in excellent order, and furnished with curious and valuable articles. The favourite one, which bore the appellation of Tien, or Heaven, commanded also a very beautiful prospect.†

After delivering the presents, and receiving others in return, the Dutch had a friendly parting with the Chinese authorities. The prime minister at first politely declined to accept any gift; but he was at

* Van Braam, vol. i. p. 261.

† Ibid. vol. i. pp. 274, 283; vol. ii. p. 9.

length prevailed on to receive the principal articles, on condition of their taking something by way of equivalent. Notwithstanding all the gayeties with which they had been entertained, they felt, in the prospect of leaving Pe-king, as if they were about to be released from a prison. Most of the waters being at this time frozen, they were perfectly aware that it would be necessary to travel the first twenty days by land ; and though they knew that this mode of proceeding would entail upon them a renewal of their hardships, they pleased themselves with the idea of passing through a part of the province of Shan-tung which had not before been visited by Europeans.

At half-past three on the afternoon of the 15th February, the embassy quitted the capital, after a residence of about five weeks. The first night they had a very indifferent supper, and were obliged to sleep on the bare floor ; which appeared an earnest of sufferings similar to those endured in the journey thither. But in their subsequent route they were agreeably surprised to find the mandarins much more attentive, and very tolerable accommodations provided. At every large city, the governor, acting upon instructions from court, had a handsome entertainment prepared. Passing through the interior of Shan-tung, instead of going as formerly along its border, they observed that the country was much better peopled, and, upon the whole, presented a more agreeable scene. They traversed some considerable towns and a crowded succession of villages, being able from one particular point to count no fewer than twenty-one. The land was highly cultivated, and more especially abounded in orchards.

At length they arrived at the mountains which they had formerly seen rising to the eastward ; but though many were barren and rocky, the labours of agriculture were carried to the utmost possible extent, and the hamlets were still numerous. Various striking and picturesque views occurred. Soon after reaching the level country, on the opposite side, they came in sight of the Yellow River ; and, on the 8th March, found at Sin-can-pou some commodious yachts which had been prepared for them. They were soon on the Great Canal, and had leisure to observe the splendid scene which has repeatedly presented itself to the eye of European travellers,—vast cities, smiling plains, and tastefully-ornamented villas. They were several times obliged to stop, owing to the passage being choked up by the crowds of barks conveying rice to the capital. The inhabitants flocked to see them in immense numbers ; and they witnessed with satisfaction a great proportion of females, many of whom were agreeable, and even elegant. In particular, when the household of a high mandarin passed in three large yachts, several of the ladies who looked out from the window appeared to them almost perfect beauties. Their curiosity was particularly excited by the promise of a full survey of the great city of Sou-tcheou-fou, the boasted paradise of China. They were received there, indeed, with cordiality, and entertained at a sumptuous banquet ; but on requesting to see the wonders of the place, were merely led through the streets to a small convent and pagoda, which presented nothing remarkable ; and on asking to be permitted to examine other objects, understood to form the ornaments of this remarkable town, some excuse

was always found by their conductor. Having expressed anxiety to see the ladies, the fame whose beauty had reached their ears, the same guide, offended at their curiosity, posted up a proclamation, by which a severe penalty was imposed on any female in Sou-tcheou-fou who should present her person to the observation of the strangers. They were thus obliged to continue their voyage completely disappointed in those brilliant expectations which they had formed from a sight of this far-famed city. They were more gratified at Hang-tcheou-fou, where they particularly admired the lake, and also the pavilions and summer-house with which its heights were crowned ; but these, having enjoyed the benefit of an imperial visit twelve years, exhibited considerable marks of decay. The Dutch, following exactly the route of Lord Macartney's embassy, passed through the province of Tche-kiang, the extreme fertility of which excited great astonishment ; but the narrative stops abruptly, some time before their arrival at Canton.*

* Van Braam, vol. ii. p. 71-295.

CHAPTER XI.

Russian Embassies.

Empires of Russia and China come in Contact—Expedition of Evashko Pettlin, the Cossack—How rendered fruitless—Isbrand Ides—His Journey to Pe-king—Entertainment at the Court—Return—Fresh Embassy under Ismayloff—Its leading Incidents—Russian Establishment at Pe-king—Timkowski.

THE empires of Russia and China, now the most powerful in Asia, were separated, at the commencement of the seventeenth century, by a wild and desert country, filling nearly the entire breadth of that continent. Yet, in the course of a hundred years, the rapid progress of discovery and conquest on the part of the former, and the accessions made to China in consequence of being itself subdued by a Tartar people, brought these two states into the closest contact, whence some slight collisions took place. These, however, were terminated, as already mentioned, by drawing a boundary-line through the vast steppes and wastes, and along the frozen rivers of Interior Asia. The arrangements thus made, and the limited connexion founded upon them, have been maintained with tolerable harmony,—less through any spirit of amity or moderation on either side, than owing to the bleak and almost inaccessible

tracts, in which alone they could carry on any hostile operations.

The Cossacks, in their victorious career across Siberia, had no sooner passed the Oby, than they formed the design of opening an intercourse with this mighty empire at the extremity of Asia. The first recorded expedition was by Evashko Pettlin, who, in 1619, set out with a companion from Tomsk. He seems to have explored his way, almost at hazard, through the nearly-unknown regions of Tartary. In ten days he came to Kirgis (the country of the Kirghises), and in eighteen days reached a lake, whose circuit is twelve days' travel on horseback, and which appears to be the Balkash, or Palkati Nor. Thence fifteen days' journey, ascending a river, brought him into the territory of the Altine Tzar, or Golden King, who seems to have been the most powerful prince in this part of Asia. From him the ambassador met a friendly reception, and even received a letter proposing an alliance with the Russians, founded on a common enmity towards the warlike Tartars who occupied the intermediate territory. Beyond his dominions the Cossack entered the land of the Mongols, but appears to have passed along its southern border, the soil of which was generally fertile, while he had on his right the states of Little Bucharia. By this route he apparently avoided the greatest breadth of the desert, as he mentions only four days spent without water. He next arrived at the country of Manchika, ruled by a great female sovereign, whom he calls Duchess. The name, as well as position, points out the country of the Mandshur Tartars; but we hear

with surprise of those rude Asiatic hordes submitting to the sway of a queen. He then came in sight of the Chinese Wall, rearing its lofty towers along the northern frontier, and serving as an effectual barrier against the incursion of the wandering tribes. He entered China at Shirokalga (Kalgan), which he describes as a castle; and, indeed, it forms on this side the key of the empire, and has the Great Wall for one division of its fortifications. The interior, however, was observed to abound in shops well stored with rich merchandise. From Kalgan he proceeded to Yara, Tayth, and White Castle, which cannot be recognised under these names; but they were found handsome cities, stocked with the most valuable commodities. He came then to Catay, by which name alone he recognised the capital of Cathay or China. He describes it as a white city, enclosed by high walls and towers, and four days' journey in circuit. In the very centre, half a day's march from each gate, was the castle where the king resided, which, either from fancy or some erroneous report, he strangely imagined to be built of loadstone. The palace situated within it is said to be adorned with a gilded roof; but he probably had no opportunity of viewing the interior of the mansion. The two Russians were received in a friendly and cordial manner, as strangers from whom nothing is dreaded usually are at this court. But they were met by the unfortunate question, what presents they had brought, and informed of the invariable rule, that without these no ambassador could appear before the sovereign of the celestial empire. The strangers, though not

aware that these gifts were intended to be construed into tribute, were obliged to acknowledge that they had brought nothing whatever of this description. The mandarins expressed much regret at the omission, and said, that if they had offered even the smallest article the emperor would have admitted them to an audience, and given them others much more valuable in return ; but in the total absence of every thing, this could not be hoped for. They received, notwithstanding, a letter, with which they took their departure on the 12th October, and in May following arrived at Tobolsk. When, however, the imperial epistle was examined, there was not found in that city an individual capable of attaching a single idea to the characters. The Cossack was then sent forward to St Petersburg ; but, though the narrative is silent, it is probable that the Oriental learning of that capital was not found sufficient to decipher it.

The conquests of Russia, before the end of the century, had reached the eastern extremity of Asia. Her detachments, spreading themselves to the south as well as the north, about 1650, came in contact with certain Chinese posts along the banks of the Amoor. This, as already observed, led, in the first instance, to a hostile collision, till a treaty was concluded, by which the boundaries of the two empires were fixed ; while liberty was given to the subjects of each, when duly provided with passports, to carry on trade in the territories of the other. Peter the Great, appreciating the benefits that might arise from this intercourse, felt a liberal desire to improve and enlarge it. With this view, in 1693, he despatched a mission, at the head of which was

Everard Isbrand Ides. The observations made by this ambassador in passing through Siberia were valuable, at a time when that vast region was only beginning to be known in Europe; but, besides being superseded by later accounts, they do not belong to the present subject. We shall therefore join him when he comes in view of the Great Wall, which he found still carefully guarded, and in as perfect repair as if it had not been erected above twenty or thirty years. He was received into Kalgan, which he calls Galkan, and immediately invited by the governor to an entertainment in the peculiar style that distinguishes the Chinese, and which appeared very new to the Russians,—the meat cut into small pieces, and placed in little cups piled over each other, from which the natives conveyed them to the mouth, not with knives or forks, but with little ivory sticks. These instruments, however imperfect they might seem, performed their part so well, that the victuals reached their destination without any damage to the raiment of the guests, though protected neither by cloth nor napkin. The palates of the strangers were particularly gratified by the soups, of which the chief ingredient was a green substance, said to be an herb found on rocks in the sea: in fact it was the edible birds'-nests, which form one of the most favourite luxuries in that country, though not usually so much relished by other nations. While they sat at table a person came in, and on his knees presented to the mandarin a list of plays, out of which that officer selected one, and the performance immediately commenced. The prologue was spoken by a very beautiful lady, magni-

ficently attired in cloth of gold adorned with jewels. The action then began, which Everard, who had not perhaps witnessed at Moscow any high displays of the dramatic art, thought very entertaining, and equal to any thing he had seen in Europe.*

The journey to Pe-king was over a great plain, covered with crops of every species of grain except rye,—the prevailing one in the cold climates from which the Russian had come. The highways were kept in the most perfect order; though they were as noisy, and filled with as great crowds, as if they had been the streets of a populous city. He relates, that he observed a temple on a rock, containing a statue, which was visited twice a-year in pilgrimage,—a form of superstition to which the Chinese are not generally addicted,—by the people of the neighbouring villages, the women in their best attire and mounted upon asses, the priests with images and tapers. The worship appears to be that of Fo. They passed also a hunting-palace of the emperor, then inhabited only by some of his ladies and their retinue. The envoy arrived at Tong-tcheou-fou, a flourishing commercial city, carrying on an extensive intercourse with Japan, Corea, and the southern provinces; and he was dazzled by the display made in its markets of beautiful porcelain. He saw the river covered with barks, having masts of bamboo, sails made of rushes, and inhabited like houses. He and his attendant proceeded to Pe-king along a spacious road bordered by magnificent seats and gardens, and, entering the city

* Astley's Collection of Voyages and Travels, vol. iii. p. 566-568.

amid the usual crowd of curious spectators, were led to their apartments in the Hotel of Ambassadors.

After three days, Isbrand Ides was honoured with the feast of welcome, at which presided the emperor's uncle and four other great lords. He was seated on the floor, and had before him a table only an ell square, on which were piled seventy silver dishes filled with dressed meats, fruits, and confections. In a few days he received instructions to appear at the castle with his commission. He was accordingly visited by three mandarins, in robes richly embroidered with figures of dragons and other animals, and was led into the imperial hall, where numerous officers, splendidly dressed, were in waiting. The emperor soon appeared on his throne, and the Russian credentials were delivered with the usual ceremonies, in which we presume the *ko-tou*, though not specified, must have been included. The two strangers were soon after invited to a splendid banquet, at which, by a singular favour, the sovereign himself presided. They were seated on the right near the throne, and the Chinese ruler graciously desired them to be brought still nearer. Having inquired what European languages they understood, he sent for Gerbillon, a French, and Thomas, a Portuguese missionary. The former acted as interpreter, putting questions in Italian respecting their journey and the situation of their country, and reporting the answers. The ambassador was afterwards entertained by the viceroy and treasurer; and two mandarins were appointed to show him every thing remarkable in the city. Next followed the usual theatrical exhibitions and juggling tricks;

but they were more particularly amused with the elephants, which had been trained to assume every imaginable position, and to imitate every sound,—the blowing of the trumpet, the roar of the tiger, the low of the ox, and even the note of the canary-bird. The Jesuits, then in high favour, showed their spacious cloister enclosed with a high wall, their church elegantly built, richly adorned with altars and images, and capable of containing 2000 or 3000 persons. They had also two globes six feet in diameter, and a museum of European curiosities.*

The embassy, during their stay, witnessed the festivities of the New Year, during which, for three days, all business was suspended, and the city was wholly occupied in religious pomp and public processions. The joy of the people was expressed by rockets and fireworks, by the beating in every quarter of the great idolatrous drums, which, with the sounding of trumpets in all the temples of the lamas, produced a noise as tremendous, as if a pitched battle had been fighting between two armies of 100,000 men each.†

The audience of leave took place in a different hall, but with ceremonies similar to those observed at their introduction. It is understood, that during this mission arrangements were made by which Russian caravans, at regular intervals, were to visit Pe-king, though under the superintendence of the Chinese government, which was to defray all their expenses ; but the habits of intoxication, to which the subjects of the Czar were addicted, and the conse-

* Astley, vol. iii. p. 574.

† Ibid. p. 573.

quent disorders, gave such umbrage to this sober and orderly people, that Kang-hi threatened the entire discontinuance of the intercourse. To avert this danger, Peter the Great, in 1719, sent an embassy under Ismayloff, of which a minute narrative has been written by our countryman, Bell of Antermomy, to whose fidelity Mr Barrow bears ample testimony.

Before reaching the Chinese frontier, the Europeans had to pass through a large portion of the immense desert of Shamo or Cobi, covered with short thin grass, full of brackish streams and lakes, and where a spring of running water was as delicious to their taste as Burgundy or Champagne. At length, on the 2d November, the cry was raised, "Land!" and the party descried, at the distance of about forty miles, the Great Wall stretching majestically along the mountain-summits. On the third day after, they reached it, and entered by the principal gate, which was shut every night, and guarded by 1000 men, commanded by two officers, one Tartar, the other Chinese. They were invited into the guard-room, and entertained with tea, fruits, and confections; and after travelling four miles farther arrived at Kalgan. They proceeded to Pe-king by nearly the same route as the former mission, entered amid a similar crowd, and were lodged in what was called the Russia House, allotted for the accommodation of the caravans. They were immediately visited by the high officers of the palace with the usual attentions; but a warm discussion soon arose respecting the performance of the ko-tou, from which the ambassador earnestly pleaded exemption, while the others insisted upon it as

required by the invariable practice of their court. A week was passed in daily messages, when the strangers at length yielded the point, stipulating, however, that when the emperor sent a minister to Russia, he should be instructed to conform himself in every respect to the usages of that government. On the 28th, the Europeans were conducted to a country-palace six miles westward, where his majesty then resided. They were ushered into a spacious enclosure, surrounded by high brick walls and planted with trees, and at the end of a noble avenue found the hall of audience. About eleven o'clock, the sovereign appeared, when all the company stood up; and the envoy having laid his credentials on a table, was desired to come near, to see the monarch touch them with his hand. This was considered very gracious, and the foreigners cherished the vain hope that the humiliating part of the ceremony was to be dispensed with. They went through it slowly and reluctantly, hoping at least for some abridgment; but the relentless Tartar incessantly called out, *Morgu* (down), *Boss* (up), till the whole nine prostrations had been completed. In the afternoon, they had a festival in the usual style, and were honoured with the presence of the sovereign, who put various questions to them respecting their country and other European states. He seems to have been impressed with a high idea of the power of Russia, and expressed surprise that she did not sooner crush so small a nation as Sweden. The entertainments consisted of music, dancing, tumbling, and wrestling.*

* Bell's Travels in Asia, in Pinkerton's Collection, vol. vii. p. 374-384.

During the remainder of his stay, the ambassador had frequent audiences of the emperor, though not in the same formal manner, and his suite received entertainments from several high officers and princes of the blood. They were also allowed free intercourse with the Catholic missionaries, who then enjoyed their short period of favour. They afterwards witnessed the gorgeous displays made at the festival of the New Year, which we have had repeated occasion to mention, and had likewise the honour of hunting with the monarch. The game, besides hares and deer, consisted of the animal producing musk, as well as of wild boars, and at the conclusion three tigers were let loose. They traversed the forest fifteen miles, but still it was without any appearance of a termination. On the 26th February 1721, the ambassador, preparatory to his immediate departure, received the imperial letter addressed to his master, and, on the 2d of March, left Pe-king.*

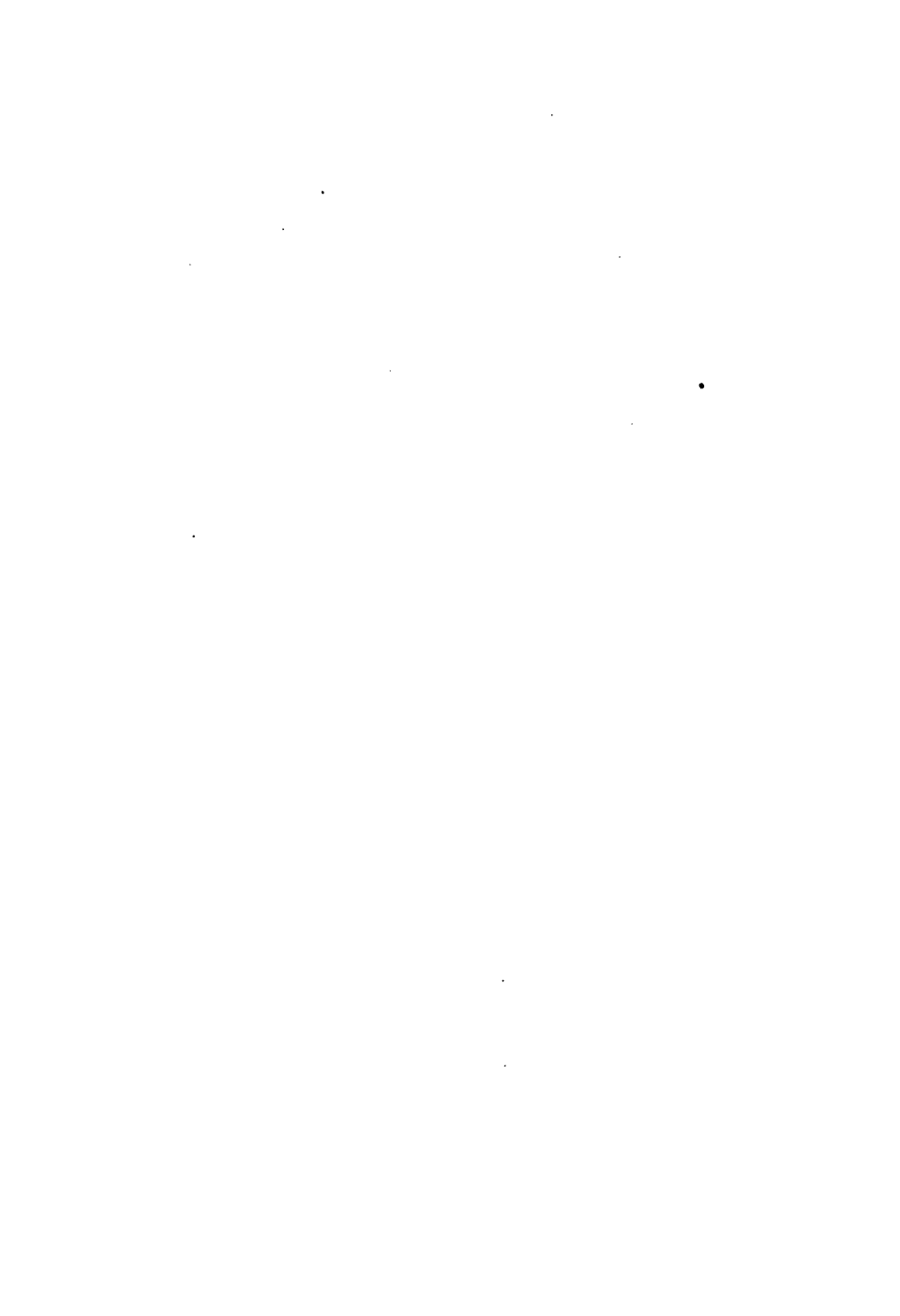
The caravans were no longer allowed to proceed to the Chinese capital, and the commerce was restricted to the frontier-stations of Kiachta and Maï-matchin. In 1728, however, Count Vladislawitsch, in a mission to the imperial metropolis, succeeded in establishing in that city an institution, partly religious and partly scientific. It consists of six ecclesiastical and four lay members, residing together in one large house, and maintained at the joint expense of the Chinese and Russian governments. The inmates, being doomed to a gloomy and recluse existence, are understood to be renewed every ten years; but as the czar often neglects to relieve them at the proper time,

* Bell, in Pinkerton, vol. vii. p. 404-407.

they are obliged to remain for a longer period. In 1820, M. Timkowski arrived as a member of this fraternity. He had no access to court, and his sequestered mode of life afforded little scope for narrative and adventure ; but his observations, contained in a publication lately given to the world, and illustrated by the learned comments of M. Klaproth, will afford some materials for the descriptive part of the present work.

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